Volume Forty-eight, Number One, July 1969

Commentary

The Price of Community Control

by David K. Cohen

Hebraism & Hellenism Now *Milton Himmelfarb*
Radical Agonies *Dennis H. Wrong*
Thanksgiving—A Story *Morris Hedges*
Way Past the Hudson *John Thompson*
A Season in the Stands *William Phillips*
TV Comedy *Neil Compton*

Books in Review
Peter Shaw *Heywood Gould* *Isidore Silver*
Guenter Lewy *Robert Lekachman*

Published by The American Jewish Committee, *One Dollar*

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RICHARD HUNT

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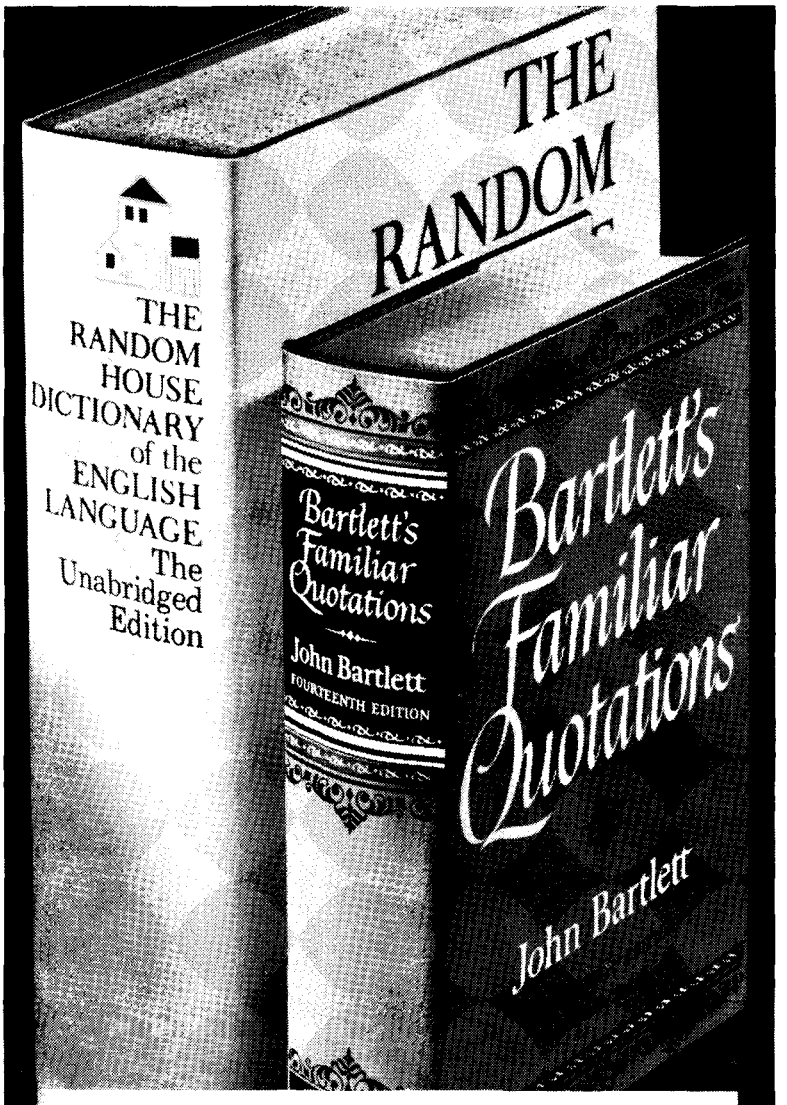

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Commentary

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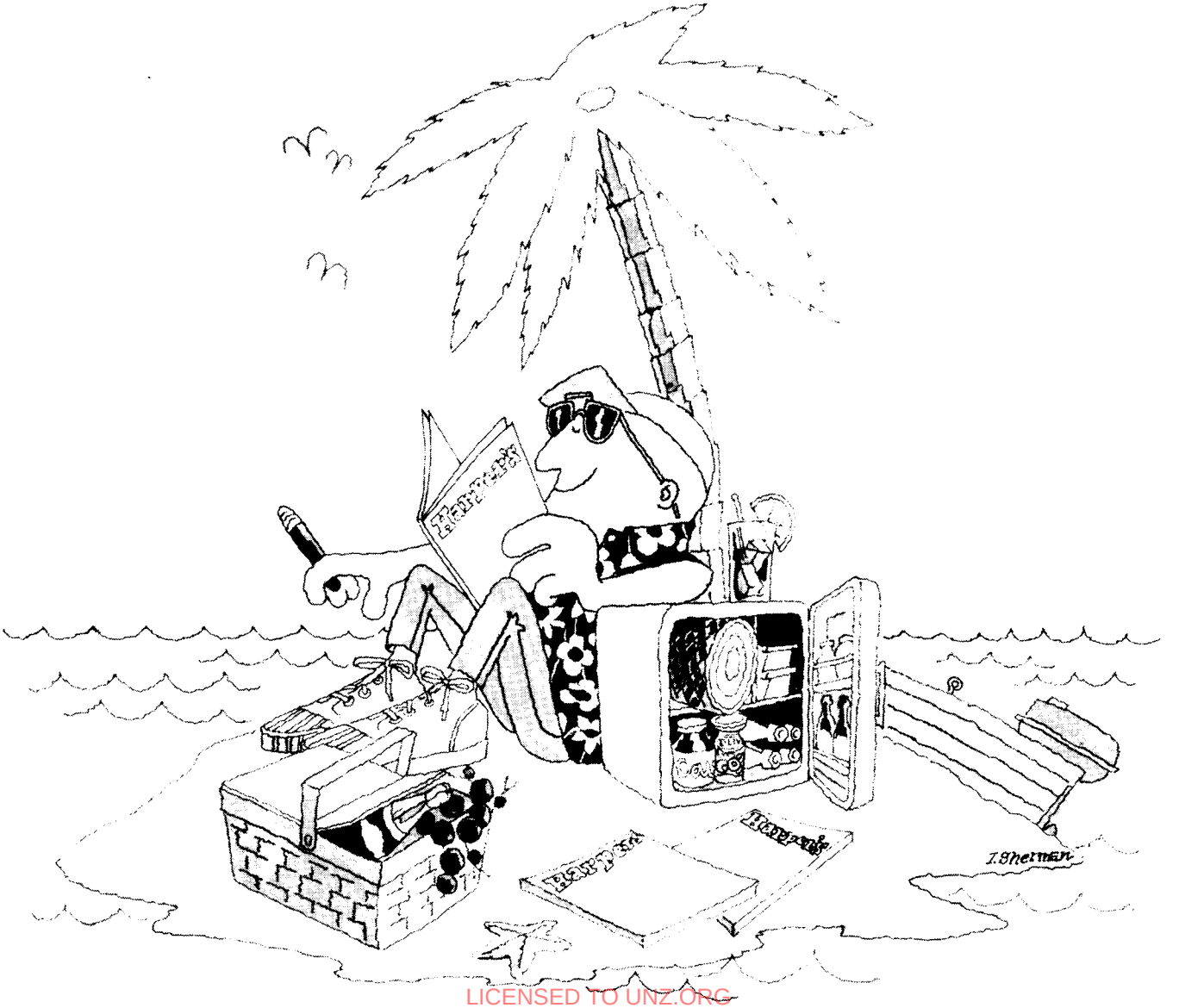

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A Statement of Aims

In sponsoring COMMENTARY, the American Jewish Committee aims to meet the need for a journal of significant thought and opinion on Jewish affairs and contemporary issues. Its pages will be hospitable to diverse points of view and belief, and it hopes to encourage original creative endeavor in the various fields of culture. The opinions and views expressed by COMMENTARY's contributors and editors are their own, and do not necessarily express the Committee's viewpoint or position. The sponsorship of COMMENTARY by the Committee is in line with its general program to enlighten and clarify public opinion on problems of Jewish concern, to fight bigotry and protect human rights, and to promote Jewish cultural interest and creative achievement in America.

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Letters from Readers

Blacks & Jews

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his article, "Blacks, Jews & the Intellectuals" [April], Nathan Glazer refers to me as one of the "distinguished sponsors" of the International Committee to Defend Eldridge Cleaver and from that seems to draw the conclusion not only that I endorse Mr. Cleaver's political views as Minister of Information of the Black Panther party, but that I am also guilty of black anti-Semitism! This technique of guilt by association is scarcely what one would have expected from Mr. Glazer—though in this instance, of course, he does me a singular honor to group me with Mr. Cleaver and his defenders.

I am a sponsor of the International Committee to Defend Eldridge Cleaver, not because I am now or ever have been a member of the Black Panther party, but because I believe that Mr. Cleaver was being subjected to political persecution by the state. His parole was cancelled and he was to be imprisoned not because he had violated the law but because the state wanted him silenced and his political activities ended. Indeed, Judge Raymond Sherwin of Solano County Superior Court stated, in granting a writ of *habeas corpus* to Mr. Cleaver:

> The uncontradicated evidence presented in this court indicated that the Petitioner [Mr. Cleaver] had been a model parolee. The peril to his parole status stemmed from no failure of personal rehabilitation, but from his undue eloquence in pursuing political goals. . . . Not only was there absence of cause for a cancellation of parole, it was the product of a type of pressure unbecoming, to say the least, to the law enforcement paraphernalia of this state.

It happens that Mr. Cleaver is one of the few black militant leaders who continued (until he went underground), despite great pressures to the contrary from many of his comrades, to emphasize the necessity and desirability of black/white unity in the political struggle. He has spoken on behalf of his people fearlessly; has tried to teach them—while also learning himself—who their exploiters are and what they must do to free themselves from exploitation; has courageously and successfully participated in the organization of poor black men and women in the Bay area whom no other political organization in recent years has been able to reach effectively, and this example is being followed in other large cities by newly formed branches of the Black Panther party—all while being subjected to severe and illegal means of police repression.

The process of organizing and agitating is accompanied by all kinds of nasty things which outrage Mr. Glazer, including namecalling and filthy language directed against policemen and mayors, businessmen and Congressmen, and that exploitative system which they maintain. Is Mr. Glazer equally outraged by the filthy language and insults to which black people are subjected daily by respectable people who hire and fire, or threaten, intimidate, and bust them, who pay them miserable wages for shit-work and then take those wages back again in the easy credit stores which abound in the ghetto? Is he equally outraged by the humiliation, oppression, and exploitation not only of the black poor of this nation, but brown and white poor? Does his outrage extend to the system which violates their lives each day, stunts their growth, and imprisons them in a class system based upon their exploitation? And does he believe that such a system can be transformed by docile and tame men? No system of exploitation can be destroyed by sweet reasonableness, and when that anger, that rage, that consciousness of great injustice takes shape and leads to political action rather than internecine violence, to armed self-defense, political agitation, and organization, rather than continued submissiveness, shall the exploited speak gently, warmly, kindly, and tenderly to their exploiters? Is it the style or the substance which Mr. Glazer finds so distasteful in the Black Panthers and other militants?

Like many other political leaders whom I respect, from Chaim Weizmann to Fidel Castro, I am in agreement with some but scarcely all of what they do or say. Nor

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Commentary Cards. Now in its fourth year, this program—sponsored by Commentary magazine—offers you masterpieces from a rich Jewish artistic heritage superbly reproduced in color for use as holiday greeting cards or for personal messages throughout the year.

Sixteen Centuries of Jewish Art. The cards, which are illustrated in black and white on the following pages, reproduce works of art from the 5th century to the present—all of particular Judaic significance. Their points of origin extend from Jewish communities in ancient North Africa to modern Europe and from Persia to the U.S.A. They include mosaics and precious metalwork, textiles and embroideries, manuscript illuminations and paintings.

Subjects of Extraordinary Beauty. Some of the cards depict aspects of Jewish history or highlight Bible episodes. Others reproduce ritual art and historic objects associated with Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah or relate to symbolic Jewish customs that are part of longstanding tradition.

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Third, for their unsurpassed value. One would expect to pay far more for reproductions of such quality and richness. But as folded greeting cards, in packages of 12 with matching envelopes, they are modestly priced at only $3 and $4 per package – just 25¢ or 35¢ per card. Each is imprinted with the appropriate greeting for the New Year in Hebrew and in English.

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39-25 Segment of a Torah wrapper, silk embroidery on linen, Eastern Europe, probably Polish, 1812.
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1-25 "And this is the Torah which Moses set before the Children of Israel." Torah wrapper detail. 1812. Full color on white; matching env.
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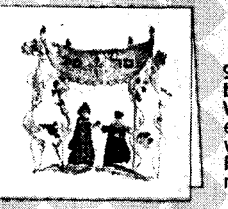

9-25 "Behold thou art betrothed to me..." Wedding detail from embroidered Torah wrapper. German. 1749. Full color on white; matching envelope.
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12-25 Decoration of Elul, last month of the Jewish year. Detail from embroidered Torah wrapper. German. 1812. Full color on white; matching env.
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47-25 "Strong as a lion." A segment from a Torah wrapper, silk embroidered with golden thread on linen, 1762.
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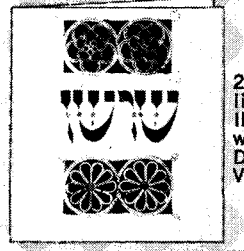

21-25 "Shoshan" – the lily symbolizing Israel. Illumination of the initial word of a poem for the Day of Atonement. Rhine Valley, ca. 1380.
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38-25 The upper portion of an Omer Calendar, written and painted on parchment, ca. 1780, and once owned by Moses Mendelssohn.
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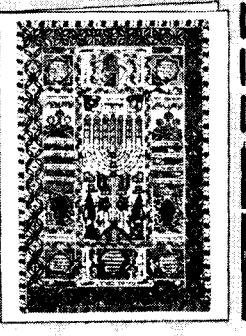

29-35 A cabbalistic drawing, probably used as a mizrach, an ornamental charm hung on the east wall of a home, ca. 1820-30. Drawn and painted on paper.
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FROM THE ROTHSCHILD MANUSCRIPT

34-25 Prayer recited as the Torah is taken from the Ark.
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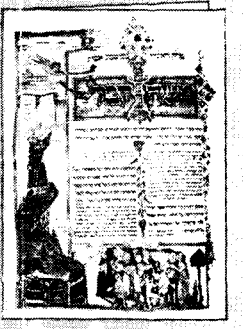

32-35 "The Ethics of the Fathers." The opening chapter of Pirke Abot.
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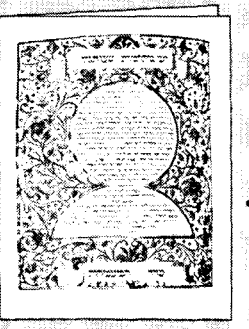

36-35 An illuminated page concerning preparations for the New Year.
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16-25 Prayer for wine. Afghanistan, 17th century.
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19-25 *Illumination* of evening prayer which begins observance of Rosh Hashanah. From an Italian Mahzor, 15th century.
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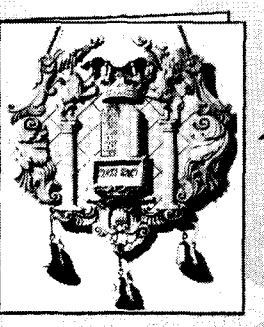

52-25 Torah breastplate. Ivory and bone. European. 17th century. Harry G. Friedman Collection, The Jewish Museum.
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54-35 Chaim Gross: Holidays. Water color. Forum Gallery.
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56-25 Mosaic from the floor of the synagogue at Hamman Lif, Tunisia. 5th century, A.D. The Brooklyn Museum.
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57-25 Harry Lieberman: The Jewish Holidays. Oil on canvas. Morris Gallery, New York City.
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63-25 Embossing of the Sh'ma prayer based on a metal plaque of the 19th century in the Harry G. Friedman Collection of the Jewish Museum.
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58-25 Feast of Drawing the Water. It is written in the Mishnah that one who has not seen the ceremony of drawing of water has not seen happiness in his lifetime. Silk and metal on taffeta. Venice, 18th century. Cooper-Hewitt Museum of Design, Smithsonian Institution.
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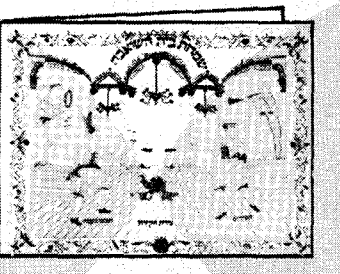

61-35 Stones of the Wailing Wall, Jerusalem. Detail. Photograph by Zev Radovan.
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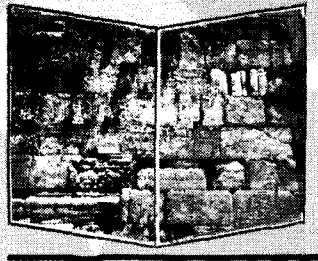

27-35 Left: Adam and Eve. Right: Noah releases the dove. From a miniature book of daily prayers. Central Europe, 1803.
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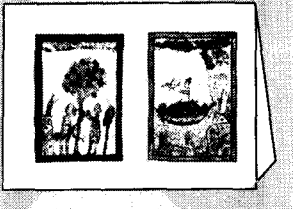

59-25 Mizrach. Paper cut-out and colored. Poland, 1868. YIVO Institute of Jewish Research.
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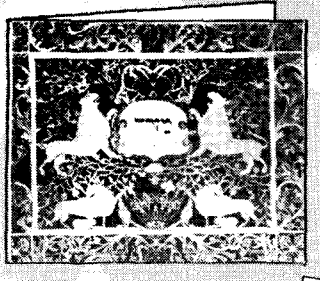

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42-35 "A woman of valor who can find?" A painting by Shalom of Safed, illustrating the virtues of a desirable mate as set forth in the Book of Proverbs, 31:10 ff.
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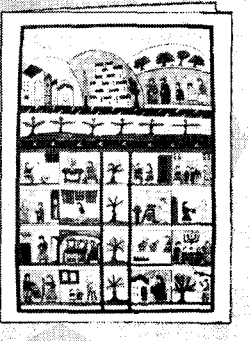

31-25 Beginning of the section of S'lichot (penitential prayers for the ten day period between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur).
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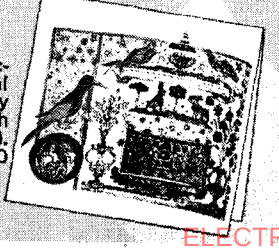

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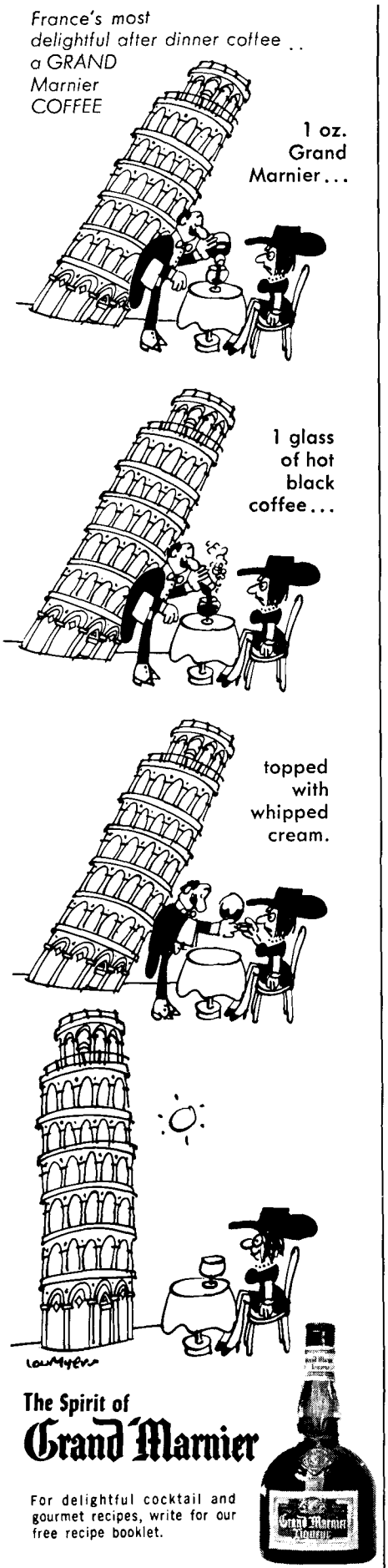

can any reasonable individual expect that to be otherwise. I believe that the influence of the Black Panther party among black youth has been positive, and that Mr. Cleaver's leadership in that party has been devoted to providing black people with an understanding of their common interests and the conditions of their emancipation. Where we have differed, and where I have thought Mr. Cleaver or other black militants wrong, I have said so clearly, publicly, and strongly. Where they have allowed themselves to be deluded by anti-Jewish propaganda or in fact to propagate it themselves, I have fought that nonsense and myopia, not only or even primarily because I am a Jew but also because I believe, as I have stated many times, that such "socialism of the fools," as August Bebel once termed it, obscures the real sources of their exploitation. I do not know what Mr. Cleaver's views on the Jewish business presence in the ghetto, once Jewish now black, are. I am certain he wants Jewish businessmen to leave the black ghettos, much as he wants other white businessmen to get out—though in his Oakland that is not a major issue. To my knowledge, he has not publicly made specifically anti-Jewish remarks nor directed anger against Jews in particular.

The Black Panther party's views on Israel, as Mr. Glazer ought to know, are scarcely my own. I publicly opposed the resolution of the Black Caucus on Israel at the National Conference for New Politics in Chicago in the fall of 1967, and reiterated that and other disagreements with the Caucus in *Ramparts* (November 1967). Coincidentally, Mr. Cleaver's piece followed directly after mine, with quite the contrary view on the meaning of the Caucus. I also wrote an article for *Ramparts*, having been sent to Israel by its editors, in the wake of the Six-Day War, defending the State of Israel and elaborating my view of the issues. In a word, I believed then and continue to believe that the Israelis are engaged in a war of national self-defense. I also believe, as I wrote (*Ramparts*, January 1968), that "the critique of Israel made by the Left socialist Zionists was not wrong. It argued that within the limits of insuring a nation's security, the search for alternatives, even dangerous ones, had to go on; that Palestine was the home of two nations, and that the Arabs and the Jews had legitimate national aspirations that need not and should not conflict with each other. The differences between the Arabs and the Jews had been exploited by the British in order to divide them [and preserve British rule], just as those differences are still exploited by the great powers to further their own interests. These views were correct. . . ." (A fuller statement of my views on Israel appears in my article with I. L. Horowitz, "Israeli Imperatives and Jewish Agonies," *Judaism*, Fall 1967.)

Finally, as Mr. Glazer knows, I wrote to the *Black Panther* editors on March 24, 1969, a letter in which I stated, among other things:

> As a Sponsor of the International Committee to Defend Eldridge Cleaver, as well . . . as a comrade in the struggle to create an America free of racism and exploitation, I want to inform you that I am opposed unequivocally to your editorial stance and reportage on the Israeli-Arab conflict. I found it especially outrageous that you would report, without comment, on the regime in Iraq and its ties with the Arab terrorists as if they were indeed fighters in the struggle for liberation. I support the Cubans. I support the Vietnamese NLF. I supported the Algerians against the French. I support the Black Panthers, and I support Israel in its struggle for existence against the terrorists who, in the name of "liberation," in fact, plunder, pillage, and murder innocent people, working on their own land and forced to defend it with their lives. I do not regard, nor have I ever regarded, the Al Assifah, the Al Fatah, or other such terrorists as "guerrillas."
>
> . . . I salute you in your struggle at home and hope that you will soon see the parallel between the black liberation struggle and the Jewish liberation struggle, which brought the Jewish people from the Pale of Czarist Russia, the Spanish inquisitors, the Polish pogroms, and the Nazi mass murderers to a small piece of land consecrated with the blood of generations, rooted in their history for two thousand years, and worked by Jewish labor in Palestine.

MAURICE ZEITLIN
Madison, Wisconsin

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To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . Mr. Glazer will "fight to the death" the authors of anti-Semitic words (i.e., cut the purse strings), but the danger of qualified men losing their means of livelihood because they are white (and Jewish) only rates a "debate within the Jewish community."

Mr. Glazer might have been more specific when he suggested that "those Jews who will have to bear the brunt of the readjustment that *must* take place . . . will have to be helped by those Jews who are not asked to suffer. Much of the money that now goes to black militants . . . might well go into such programs." Perhaps this money could go to outfit them as peddlers?

David Miller
Glen Rock, New Jersey

To the Editor of Commentary:

Nathan Glazer's article is helpful on the whole, but misses the mark in a few places. The National Conference for New Politics did not pass any anti-Semitic resolutions; it did pass a resolution condemning Zionist imperialism, not "without argument," as Mr. Glazer states, but after heated debate. The reasons for the vote had little to do with anti-Zionist sentiments on the part of the participants, but reflected the complex black-white interaction at the Conference.

I think Glazer is mistaken in attributing black violence or anti-Semitism even in part to the influence of the white Left. There just isn't that much communication between these two groups. If anything, the influence has been in the other direction—white students responding to black riots with feelings of guilt for their white middle-class origins and with rhetorical violence of their own.

Glazer overlooks the everyday violence of ghetto life; as ghetto residents were drawn into political action they brought with them attitudes reflecting their environment; this largely explains why the civil-rights movement abandoned nonviolent action. Another major source of violence overlooked by Glazer is the war in Vietnam, which for a number of years has exposed us to repeated acts of planned wholesale brutality, and which has so polarized attitudes that the usual inhibitions against violence have largely disappeared. These attitudes are now so extreme and so widespread that domestic violence may well

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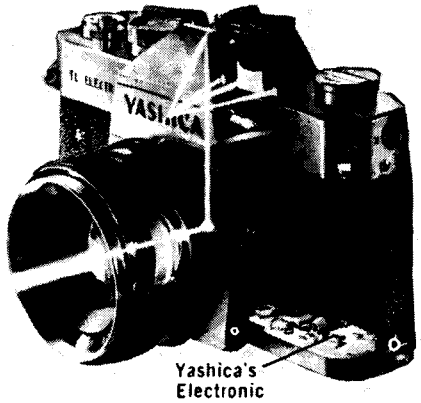

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continue after the war ends. The large number of weapons being shipped home by black soldiers in Vietnam is an ominous indication of this possibility.

DAVID F. GREENBERG
The Resistance
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Who is responsible for the black man's plight in this country? Why is this key point always casually dismissed by all of our scholarly essayists? I heartily disagree with Mr. Glazer when he says, "The Negro position *may have* been created by American race prejudice, in which Jews have of course shared. . . ."

We cannot be so blasé about this important point. We *are* responsible for the black man's situation in this country. This country has done enough hedging on this controversial topic. It is about time that the white intelligentsia and the larger white population as a whole accept the blame for the current racial chaos. We did virtually nothing to help the black man achieve the freedoms he is just beginning to enjoy, and history certainly bears this out.

ROBERT V. WEINSTEIN
Brooklyn, New York

MR. GLAZER writes:

I am glad Maurice Zeitlin has written his letter. It gives me a chance to clarify my intentions in listing some of the signers of the Eldridge Cleaver advertisement, intentions which did not emerge clearly enough in the article. My conscience has been troubled by the justice or legitimacy of citing the ad and its signers to support my point that the anti-Semitism we find among some black militants (I know Cleaver personally is not among them) must be seen as "an element of the enraged nihilism that so many white and Jewish intellectuals have encouraged among black intellectuals—and not only intellectuals." But I believe my point was valid, if poorly expressed. Let me first explain what I was *not* doing.

First, I was *not* accusing any of the signers of anti-Semitism, black or otherwise.

Second, I was *not* assuming they shared Eldridge Cleaver's political views in all or even any respects.

Third, I was *not* suggesting they shared the political views of the *Black Panther*—in fact, I *did* suggest they were probably unaware of the *Black Panther*'s rhetoric on Israel and might find it repulsive. In fact, many of the signers—to whom I wrote privately and separately—do find these views objectionable. I deeply appreciate Mr. Zeitlin's action in this respect. I know it is far more helpful and valuable in moderating the dangerously extreme position on Israel held by many of the Left than anything I might do, because Mr. Zeitlin's credentials as a member of the Left are unimpeachable.

Fourth, I could not possibly object—and I did not—to the action of many people who believe that Eldridge Cleaver's civil rights have been violated to draw attention to what they consider a serious miscarriage of justice. I do not share their views, but the facts are obscure and complicated, and it is understandable how anyone might be convinced, on the basis of his reading of the facts, that Cleaver's parole was lifted because of his political views, or because of police lies as to what actually happened to occasion the shooting. I myself would like to know what the police said, and what the other judges said, before deciding —as we all know, however, it is far easier to get access to what Eldridge Cleaver and his supporters say. Had I been approached to sign the ad, I might have made an earnest effort to find out, and I might well have been convinced that Eldridge Cleaver's cause was just. But I could not have signed an ad that said "Eldridge Cleaver is a victim of naked, shameless political persecution" and "Cleaver is in exile because a man of his convictions cannot get justice here." If one were to analyze the reasons for Cleaver's plight, one could not leave out the obvious one: the Black Panthers and their publication, for which he bore responsibility, encourage and applaud the indiscriminate killing of policemen. Indeed, I doubt that the ad I could have signed for Cleaver—and I believe even those who encourage and applaud the killing of policemen have civil rights that should be respected—would have been found by the editors of the *Black Panther* such desirable copy that they would devote a full page to it week after week for months, running it alongside their pictures of bleeding and dying "pigs."

Which brings me to what I was doing in listing some of the signers of the ad. I argued in my arti-

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cle that many intellectuals—and of course Jews must be prominent in any group of American intellectuals—now believe this country is incapable of achieving any significant change through democratic political processes. Since they believe we are dominated by classes and individuals who engage in the inhuman oppression of the poor and the non-white here and abroad, they see violence—in favor of the poor and the non-white—as inevitable and do not condemn it, even if they do not directly advocate it. This is a very moderate and I hope fair statement of a point of view that is now very widespread among intellectuals, and in my judgment it is the dominant point of view of the signers of the Eldridge Cleaver ad. Perhaps I have been unjust to some individuals among the signers—but the tone of the ad and the actions of many of the signers in other contexts support this interpretation.

My argument was—and is—that far more important than the occasional expressions of anti-Semitism among black militants is the tone which increasingly dominates politics in this country, a tone for which intellectuals, and of course many Jewish intellectuals, bear a major share of responsibility. It is a tone which encourages violence even if it does not specifically advocate it. It is a tone which steadily undermines the capacity of policemen, courts, legislatures, and administrators to carry out functions that are valuable and necessary in any civil society in which people feel secure. It is a tone which is steadily bringing us to the destruction of a democratic society that protects minorities—Jews and Negroes among them—far better than any I can think of, a society that despite its grave faults is capable of change and provides a broader life to more people—and I include Negroes among them—than any imaginable alternative that will follow its destruction.

I know I was shocked when I saw the names attached to the Eldridge Cleaver ad in the pages of the *Black Panther*. I know some of the signers of the ad were shocked to find they were considered to fit into such a context. The next question is the extent to which the political position they have fostered and advocated over the past five years does relate them to that repulsive context.

As to the rest of Maurice Zeitlin's letter—we are simply in disagreement. There is no point in rehearsing the differences between a revolutionary outlook, which will naturally understand the excesses on the way to making revolutionaries and revolution, and my own position, which sees no need for violent revolution in this country, and which is convinced that the horrors it would involve would not be rewarded with a society markedly superior to, or even very different from, the one we have. We know that post-revolutionary countries can devote as large a part of their substance to war preparation and war as capitalist ones, can oppress foreign peoples and minorities in their own midst, and can engage in far more serious violations of human rights than we see in capitalist countries. Under the circumstances, let us improve what we have, instead of encouraging a bloodbath to get what is no better.

On David Miller's letter: There are some things that can be done. We could set up a fund to rescue Jewish shopkeepers from the ghetto, and arrange for the transfer of their businesses to black owners or cooperatives, before they are looted and burned. It will be harder to recompense the schoolteachers who hoped to become principals. It is a complicated question, but Jewish organizations should think about it. Property rights and job rights are not absolute.

On David Greenberg's letter: I accept his elaboration on the National Conference for New Politics. There is a difference between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. But if we can find subtle appeals to anti-Negro feeling in the use of the "law and order" slogan, we should not hesitate to note the anti-Semitic implications of the "Zionist imperialism" slogan.

On Mr. Weinstein: my point, if he will look at my article, is that whatever the causes of the Negro's position historically—and certainly the capture of Negroes in Africa, their enslavement here, and discrimination and prejudice after their enslavement are the major causes—they may not give us the best guidance as to what is to be done, just as Mr. Weinstein's acceptance of full responsibility for the present racial chaos gives *him* no guidance as to what to do about it.

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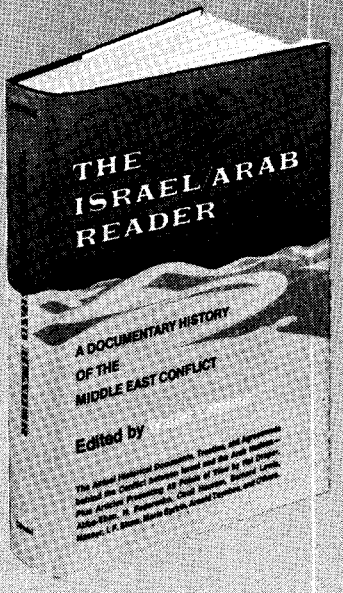

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Portnoy Defended

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . I take rather strong exception to Peter Shaw's "Portnoy and His Creator" [May]. Whatever the final merits of *Portnoy's Complaint* (and I think they are considerable), it seems to me that a reviewer should deal with Mr. Roth's novel in other than the ad hominem (re Roth) and reductionist (re Roth's supposed attitude toward Jews) manner that Mr. Shaw does. Though reviews of the "Roth is fouling his own nest" variety might have been interesting the first time around (in the case of *Goodbye, Columbus*) . . . they are, finally, fruitless, wrongheaded, and unenlightening.

Consider examples in our recent cultural life. When Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* was first published it was assailed by certain black radicals as a betrayal of the Negro. Or to take another example: at one time Faulkner's work was consistently damned by professional Southerners as defamatory toward the South. This is not to mention the attacks both Hannah Arendt and I. F. Stone have incurred in recent years because in their writings they have dared to question some of the received truths about the Jewish people and Israel. Mr. Shaw, it seems to me, has fallen victim to this same type of one-dimensional criticism, in which, because the artist or writer is of a certain religious, racial, or regional group, he dare not hint at less than perfection among that group. . . .

In Mr. Shaw's review I found no mention of the fact that Roth had unfairly stereotyped all young women from West Virginia's mountain people as nymphomaniacs, lacking the most elemental grasp of culture. Wasn't Roth also rather snide toward Midwestern corn-fed college girls? One sees how really silly the thrust of Mr. Shaw's reviewing technique is. If one is to read the book as an example of Roth's misanthropy, then Roth must be brought to the bar for demamation of WASPS as well as Jews. . . .

Mr. Shaw fails totally to come to grips with the novel as anything other than a diatribe against Jews. The perfect fate for his review would be its inclusion in a book entitled *Ten Angry Critics Reply to Philip Roth.*

Richard King

Washington, D.C.

To the Editor of Commentary:

Peter Shaw chose to review *Portnoy's Complaint* in terms of an article written by Philip Roth six years ago in answer to the charges of self-hatred which greeted *Goodbye, Columbus.* In this article Roth claimed that actually he was doing the Jews a service by presenting them in an unattractive light because "the solution is not to convince people to like the Jews so as not to want to kill them; it is to let them know they cannot kill them even if they despise them." Shaw claims that *Portnoy's Complaint* cannot be defended on such a basis. He is right. But what has that to do with the book? . . . No one actually believes that Roth wrote the novel as a favor to Jews. . . . Roth obviously doesn't care whether the book is good for the Jews or not. . . .

Barbara Cohen

Somerville, New Jersey

The May Issue

To the Editor of Commentary:

Three brief comments on your May issue. First of all, my warmest congratulations and thanks for the splendid article by Allen Wheelis ["How People Change"]. I don't believe that I have ever seen this knotty question of determination versus free will so eloquently or persuasively handled. . . . I hope it may clarify to both the worshippers and debunkers of psychiatry just how much it can and cannot do. A superb article.

I am disappointed, however, in the reply to Chomsky's work ["The Position of Noam Chomsky," by Lionel Abel] and also the review of *Portnoy's Complaint* ["Portnoy and his Creator," by Peter Shaw]. I think *Portnoy* a very funny book; what's more to the point, I know quite a number of Jewish people who agree. Furthermore, it raises in vivid and therefore comprehensible terms a serious and not sufficiently understood issue, very well summarized in the title of Freud's book (used in the excerpt from *Portnoy* published in the *New American Review*), *Civilization and Its Discontents.*

Finally, I was most interested to read, in David Gold's letter, the following: "If American Jewish life is to have any future, it must be founded on the most authentic and accurate knowledge of our past and present that scholarship can provide. . . ." This is the very best statement of the case for

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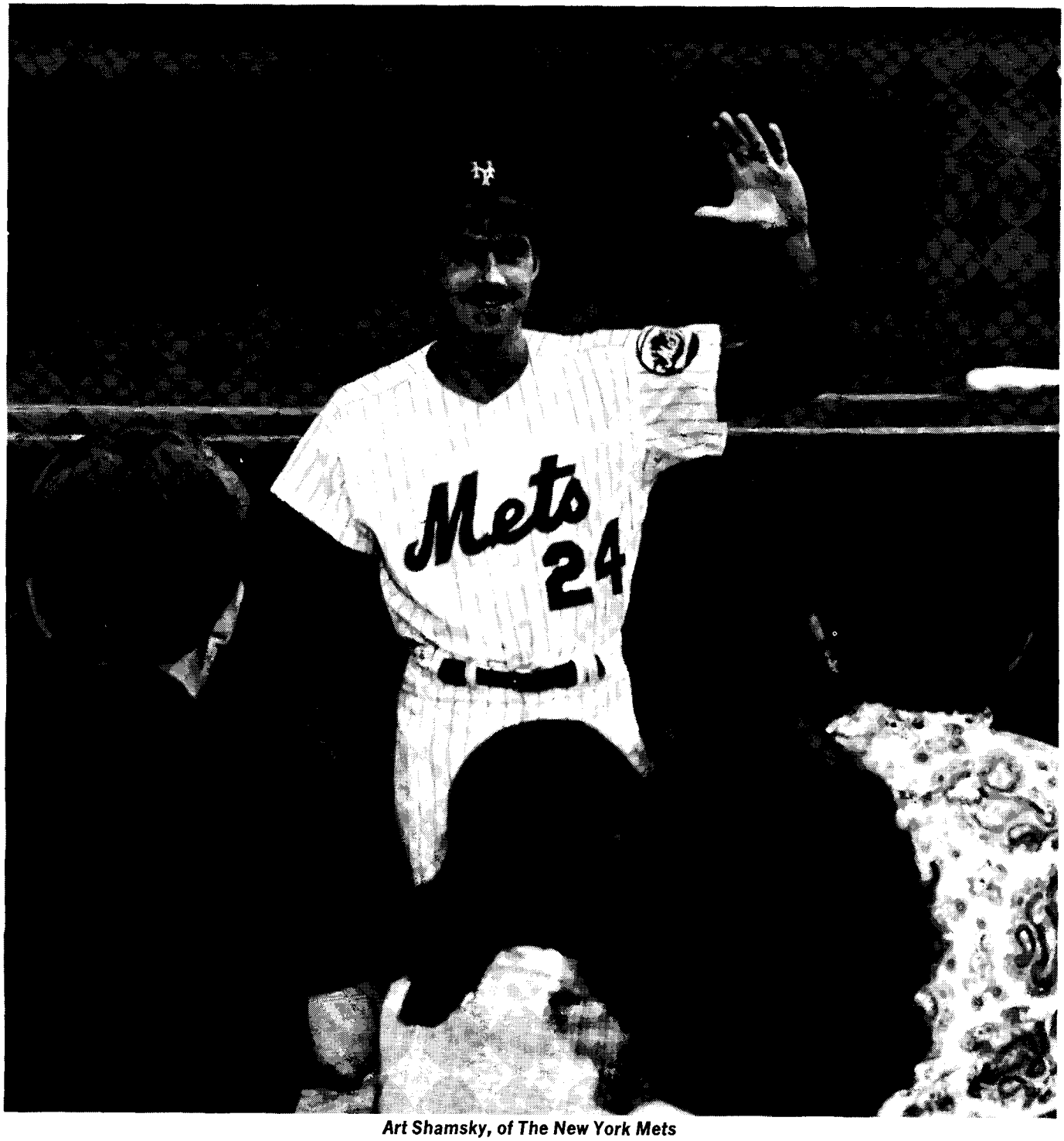

Art Shamsky, of The New York Mets

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black studies that I have seen, and I am surprised that so few of our educators, many of whom are Jewish, have understood this. In fact, I think it is not far from the truth to say that the response of virtually all educators to the blacks' demand for black studies has been one of sneering contempt. We should know better.

JOHN HOLT
Boston, Massachusetts

Author's Reply

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I think your readers expect *some* sort of reply from me to Mortimer T. Cohen's "review" of *The Joys of Yiddish* [March]. May I address myself only to where it is excessively false and misleading?

1) I am berated for not discussing the influence of "literary Yiddish" on English. *What* influence? "Literary" Yiddish has exercised no discernible influence on English; my book deals with those Yiddish words and phrases that are encountered in English speech and print. It is a peculiar mentality that attacks an author for not discussing a subject that does not exist.

2) Your reviewer calls me too "ignorant" to know that Yiddish words invade English for "socioeconomic, not linguistic, reasons." To fortify his odd indictment, your "socioeconomist" says that Greek restaurants are concentrated in the South (!) and that in the English used "in the South, Midwest, the Far West . . . Yiddishisms are conspicuous by their absence." I was raised in the Midwest, lived for twelve years in the Far West, and have eaten in umpteen Greek restaurants in a dozen cities north of the Mason-Dixon line; your reviewer's statements are as foolish as they are wrong.

3) Your reviewer assails my "scholarly apparatus, references to professional journals, and the like." Should I, then, *not* have credited my sources? And in that case, would I not have been accused of (a) making unsupported statements, or (b) plagiarizing?

Compare your reviewer's contempt for the canons of scholarship with the judgment of, say, several editors of *The Great Yiddish Dictionary*; or F. Stuart Crawford of the *Merriam Webster New International Dictionary*, who writes: "*The Joys of Yiddish* is an extremely useful tool for lexicography. . . . We are grateful for the attention given to the origins of Yiddish words, since no existing Yiddish dictionary gives etymologies."

4) Your reviewer says I "butcher" stories, citing a tale "in which the heart of the joke lies in the shadchen's social activity." The poor man understands neither the joke nor its heart: what the story illustrates is the remarkable intellectual gymnastics of ordinary Jews who apply sophisticated inductive analysis to everyday problems. (I suspect that your peculiar *mayvin* would dismiss Freud's *Wit and the Unconscious* as a "collection of stale jokes.")

5) I am scourged for "social bias" because I included two Yiddish words commonly used—and heard at Radcliffe. Should I have omitted them *because* of Radcliffe? How perverse can reverse snobbery be?

6) Your reviewer charges that I have found a "formula" for humor. I wish he would reveal it: it would make my work easier. As for his puzzling attack on *The Education of H*Y*M*A*N K*A*P*L*A*N,* I resign myself to the kinder verdict of three decades of readers and critics (one of whom, Isaiah Berlin, described Mr. Kaplan as "one of the great comic creations of the 20th century").

7) Your reviewer raises the shabby flag of prudery to denounce me for including "vulgar" words in my catalogue. Since when is a lexicon a censor? (Incidentally, each of the ten "street words" I included, out of a total of 486, was immediately identified as "obscene" or "vulgarism.") Compare your reviewer's phobic reaction with the comments in another Jewish journal, *Midstream* (January), where S. Shunra wrote: "*The Joys of Yiddish* is to be recommended whole-heartedly. All the words are good, all are a pleasure, and if some are a bit off-color, what of it? We all use these words anyway, so we may as well know what we are talking about. . . ."

8) Your reviewer's rage drove him to side-swipes about "a masked contempt for one's own group . . . spiritual self-immolation." Such slander (it is surely nothing less) may be set beside the contrary comments of such hardly anti-Semitic people as Professor Nathan Susskind, a leading authority on Yiddish; Maurice Samuel; David L. Bazelon; Brooks Atkinson; Harold Taylor; Robert Ardrey; Rex Stout; Margaret

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Mead; Luigi Barzini; or Rabbis Solomon Freehof, Bernard Mandelbaum, Samuel Silver, Seymour Siegel, Andrew Robins, Solomon Goldfarb; or the *Bulletin of the New York Board of Rabbis,* in which Rabbi Theodore Lewis wrote: "In contrast with many self-hating Jews who write about Jews and Judaism venomously, Rosten writes out of deep attachment, love, understanding, and knowledge. His devotion to the Jewish people and its heritage makes the volume a pure delight."

I just received a beautiful brochure from the *Commentary Library* announcing its current choice, a book described as "having everything—scholarship, insight, illumination an wit" (Saul K. Padover); "a major contribution to the study of Yiddish language and literature" (Rabbi Louis Finkelstein); "the best book about the American language since Mencken" (Daniel Boorstin); "a joy of a book—intelligent, scholarly" (Chaim Potok). And guess what the book is? . . .

LEO ROSTEN

New York City

MR. COHEN writes:

"A soft answer turneth away wrath." I would turn away Mr. Rosten's wrath by granting that the tone of the review was too sharp and the use of the word "ignorant" uncalled for. But I ask him to consider that to me the merest tot in a Talmud Torah is the heir of a five-millennia-old civilization, and when I come across a joke which suggests that an English aristocrat or two Radcliffe girls are somehow superior to anyone who speaks Yiddish, I find it coarse and insulting. Yet, I will admit that all nations have anecdotes which are self-critical and it is possible I over-reacted. One thing is certain: I am sure Mr. Rosten is—as I am—a true lover of the Yiddish language and literature and the Jewish people. However, I cannot withdraw my opinion about the basic vulgarity of the book. It reminds me of night-culb entertainers, TV comedians, and hotel MC's. "For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool." This is a subjective evaluation, and judging from the success of the book, I have not been able to impose it upon the reading public. In any case, I would not make my own tastes the standard for others. I regret that Mr. Rosten was disturbed by the review.

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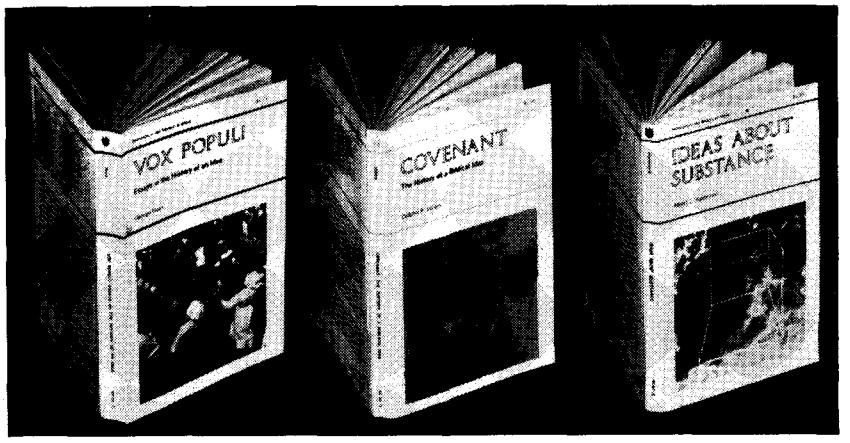

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Television

TV Comedy

Neil Compton

I WAS a little irritated with one of my English department colleagues the other day. This very strict and uncompromising scholar peremptorily rejected his proposed teaching schedule for next year because it included a Monday evening class. However, all annoyance melted when I learned the reason: he didn't want to miss *Laugh-In*.

If it can inspire such devotion even in the academic breast, commercial television must occasionally do at least some things right. There are, in fact, four kinds of program in which the pretensions of the major networks are fairly regularly matched by achievement. All three organizations are capable of turning out excellent documentaries on any subject which can be expressed in visual terms. They cover certain kinds of news with superlative skill—funerals, congressional hearings, political travels, riots, and conventions (but not peace talks, parliamentary or congressional debates, or complex political crises). They have raised the layman's appreciation of such sports as football, basketball, and hockey to the level of devoted connoisseurship—perhaps at the expense of allegedly untelegenic baseball. Finally, they seem now to be fostering a tradition of sophisticated comedy which ostensibly subverts the values prevailing everywhere else in the program schedule.

This last genre appears to be running into trouble. After a season of skirmishing over prescreening for purposes of censorship, CBS and the egregious Smothers Brothers have parted, and the *Comedy Hour* will not be on the air next autumn. ABC's *Turn-On* was summarily canceled after one "outrageous" broadcast. Meanwhile, Senator Pastore has been campaigning for a Surgeon-General's report on the relation between televiewing and moral cancer. Naturally, he favors prescreening, except for wholesome fare like *The Sound of Music*: "Now, you wouldn't want to prescreen *that*. Everyone knows that's a good movie." In his unmistakably orotund prose, President Nixon agrees: "I share your deep concern and strongly applaud your vigorous criticism of what you regard as a misuse of this great medium."

Meanwhile, the deplorably lewd and irreverent show on which Richard Nixon himself once invited us to Sock It To Him reigns unchallenged at the top of the ratings. If Senator Pastore hopes to cajole NBC into toning down *Laugh-In*, then he had better try to manipulate a few low Nielsens. There is nothing like a high-cost-per-thousand for engendering virtue in the hearts of network executives.

IT WOULD BE interesting to trace in detail the freedom of television humor as it has broadened down from precedent to precedent over the past two decades. The earliest comedy series—such as *Ozzie and Harriet*, *I Love Lucy*, and *Leave it to Beaver*—all blandly celebrated the domestic virtues of suburbia in its days of pre-wife-swapping innocence. The nearest approaches to satire were the mother-in-law jokes of the stand-up comedians transplanted from Las Vegas or New York, or the ubiquitous impressionists imitating Ed Sullivan on *Toast of the Town*. In the mid-50's, Jackie Gleason's *The Honeymooners* contributed an exhilarating dash of proletarian realism, but the Kramdens' heroic marital conflicts ("Some day, some day, Alice . . . trip to the MOON!") always modulated toward an improbably tender conclusion.

Satire and irony made their first real appearance on television in the form of parodies of other kinds of entertainment. Sid Caesar was a pioneer of this mode, with his elaborate take-offs on such genres as Italian opera, Japanese movies, pop quartets, and Hollywood

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epics. The Canadian comics Wayne and Shuster specialized in yoking disparate media clichés together, as in their Shakespearean baseball game or their skit, "Frontier Psychiatrist" ("There is no such thing as a bad man—only problem cowboys"). Meanwhile, a new breed of monologists and stand-up comedians, including Shelley Berman, Mort Sahl, and Bob Newhart, began to extend the social and intellectual range of their material—chiefly in the direction of a sort of Oxford-gray equivalent of the black humor then flourishing in theaters and night clubs.

Nevertheless, American television remained oddly timid and innocuous in comparison with what was going on in Britain and Canada around the same time. During the early 60's, the BBC introduced *That Was the Week That Was,* perhaps the most savagely disrespectful program ever to be regularly broadcast. The CBC's *This Hour Has Seven Days* was scarcely less shocking to Canadian sensibilities, though its improprieties were mild by BBC standards. Both these programs were wildly successful for comparatively brief periods, until the need to maintain impetus by escalating outrageousness brought them into conflict not merely with officialdom but also with many of their most faithful original viewers. On the other hand, the American version of *That Was the Week That Was* (1964), which I never saw, seems never to have quite found its own style or its own audience.

POLITICAL SATIRE is a minor ingredient in the formula of *Laugh-In,* a series that was launched experimentally on the airwaves in 1967, and has been a regular network feature since January 1968. *Laugh-In* derives from such venerable American institutions as vaudeville, burlesque, radio programs like the old Fred Allen show, and Hollywood self-parody. However, the program's irreverence toward many traditions hitherto sacred on TV undoubtedly derives emotional authority from the social traumata of the civil-rights struggle, the Vietnam war, and the conflict of generations. Above all, the daring use of color, the deliberate discontinuity, the hedonistic morality, and the reliance upon absurdity and juxtaposition make *Laugh-In* an authentic expression of this moment in the history of the American middle classes—a compliment which no previous television program has come even close to deserving. The enthusiasm with which it has been greeted by both public and critics in Britain suggests that *Laugh-In* celebrates a life-style that is becoming universal in the West.

HAVING committed myself to such extravagant praise, I must confess that it is difficult to account precisely for *Laugh-In*'s success: the whole is so obviously greater than the sum of its parts. The feeble knock-knock jokes, Dick Martin's inane anecdotes of his aunt's escapades, and the rather dreary take-offs on the news would not stand up for a moment in the cold type of a script. The program's charm derives almost entirely from skillful editing and a brilliant crew of regular performers. The shifts in rhythm and pace among such regular features as the cocktail party with its moments of frozen action while the camera zooms in on a wisecrack; the blackout skits with their variations on a theme ("Heah come de judge!"; songs at the piano); and the cameo shots of celebrities are orchestrated to maintain a constantly varied tension between expectation and fulfillment. The cast of characters—Ruth Buzzi's Gladys, Arte Johnson's sinister Kraut and quintessential dirty old man, Alan Sues's gay sports announcer, Henry Gibson's parson, and all the others—constitute a pantheon of American comic archetypes. *Laugh-In* has maintained its élan throughout one and a half seasons—much longer than I would have predicted. It seems too much to expect that the pace can be kept up throughout 1969-70, but there is no harm in hoping.

Never a network to turn down a good thing merely because it too closely resembles someone else's smash hit, ABC made an abortive play for the *Laugh-In* audience with a program called *Turn-On.* Conceived by Ed Friendly and George Schlatter, the producers of *Laugh-In,* it hit the air on February 5, provoked immediate howls of disapproval from both network outlets and the public, and dropped forever from the ABC schedules on February 6. Why all the fuss? The jokes on *Turn-On* seemed to me no "worse" than those of *Laugh-In,* either politically ("Where is the capital of South Vietnam? Mostly in Swiss banks") or sexually ("What are we going to do about inflation? Well, I've been taking the pill"). The program may have appeared more offensive than it really was because there were no genial figures like Rowan and Martin to cushion the impact: instead, the producers used the slightly sinister gimmick of a computer playing electronic music and turning on both the program and the audience. In effect, they proved that flesh-and-blood comedians should be safe from the danger of technological unemployment for some years to come.

Turn-On's failure was a pity, because although the first program did have some dreary moments, it also tried out some interesting ideas. One was a kind of living comic strip: the screen was quartered, each frame came to life in turn with picture and sound, and the whole added up to the video equivalent of a daily newspaper strip cartoon sequence. Another involved a combination of photography and cartoons—for instance a series of quick shots of a female navel; beside one, a cartoon cat waited intently for something to pop out; from another, an arm and hand emerged, bearing a sign marked HELP! (On second thought, I *can* see why everyone was upset about *Turn-On.*)

PRAISING the *Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* goes against the grain for me. A few minutes of Tommy's and Dicky's chatter and I'm ready to join Al Capp in a crusade against youth. However, the cause of liberty sometimes chooses strange instruments for its purposes (I can recall when the Jehovah's Witnesses formed the spearhead of resistance to a repressive regime in my native Quebec), and the Brothers have earned a place in the history of television

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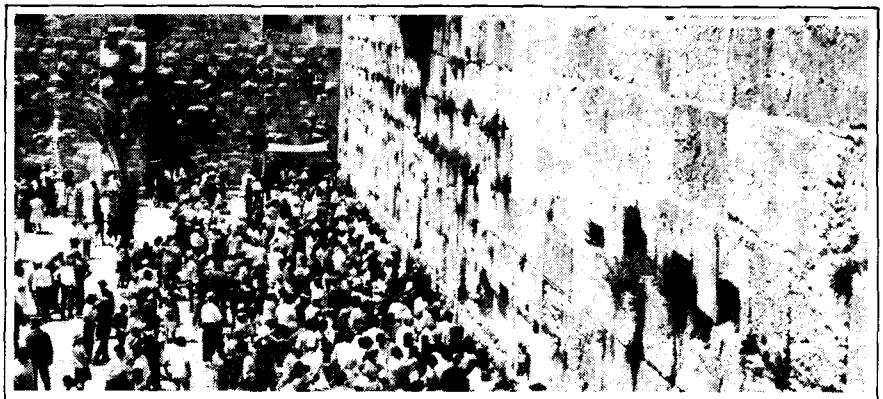
freedom. What is more to the point here, they have played an important part in introducing to television a new breed of comedian prepared to make greater demands upon the audience's intelligence (and therefore more important) material than their predecessors.

The most consistently amusing of this new breed is a sad, poker-faced clown named Pat Paulsen, whose campaign for the Presidency of the United States was more distinguished by reason and concern for the issues than that of any of the official candidates. He was a master of the snappy slogan ("I *offer you a real choice—black or* white") and the cogent answer to questions from the floor ("The heart of the matter, in the final analysis, escapes me"). After the election, the Brothers presented "A Fable for our Times," in which a superb impressionist, David Frye, successively played King Lyndon and the three would-be successors who strove to prove their claim to the throne by plucking the sword of sovereignty from a rock. All failed, though Sir Richard ended by receiving the plaudits of the crowd, and stalked off to be crowned. Onto the empty stage came a humble streetcleaner with his ashcan on wheels—Pat Paulsen. He pulled the sword easily from its lodging, dumped it in the can, and scurried off. No comment.

Paulsen is a gifted pantomimist. On a recent *Glen Campbell Hour* (CBS)—a kind of spin-off of the Smothers show—he appeared in a touchingly funny mime skit about a pair of picnicking lovers. Slowing and speeding the tape helped to achieve a dreamlike quality that was no less beautiful than amusing. The Brothers can also take credit for discovering and featuring a whole troupe of excellent mimes—*The Committee*, whose skits on waiting-room chair-rappers and trapeze artists are easier to praise than to describe.

FINALLY, in this desultory survey of the new scene in TV humor, I ought to mention another innovation of the *Glen Campbell Hour*—the white-in. This "aural" reversal of the "visual" blackout fea-



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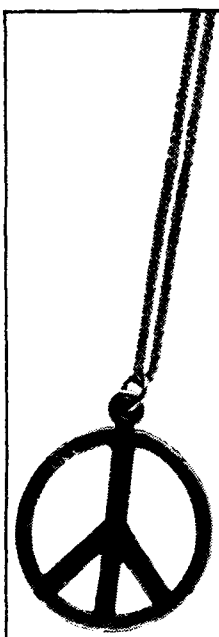

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tures a few lines of dialogue spoken while the screen is blank. Then the video lights up and completes the gag; for instance, an employer fires a man for acting the office clown. On come the lights, and there is the victim in motley, white-face, and a great red wig. No prizes are offered for further variations on this attempt to take the mickey out of metaphor.

Ever since I began this review, I have been haunted by the feeling that much of the comedy I have described as sophisticated and mature bears a strong family resemblance to the sort of thing one finds in two media to which these terms are not usually applied —*Mad* magazine and children's comic cartoon shows (which I reviewed in COMMENTARY, October 1966). Like all the popular arts, television seems emotionally arrested at the stage of adolescent revolt, and all the intelligence in the world cannot alter that fact. Of course, protest of this kind is a valid if drastically limited reaction to the complex inhumanities of the social order. What a pity that those who express it on TV seem to have no alternative to offer but an emasculated version of Hugh Hefner's philosophy.

THREE GOOD books on television have recently appeared, making the 1968-69 publishing season a bumper year.

John S. Whale's *The Half-Shut Eye** is quite simply one of the best books ever written about television and politics. These days, most such volumes are the work of academics or quasi-academics. Whale, however, is a practicing TV reporter with extensive experience on both sides of the Atlantic, and his penetrating generalizations are based upon first-hand observation of all the major political campaigns of the past ten years in Britain and America. He concludes that television is not a great medium misused, but one with inherent limitations which account for virtually all its shortcomings. He does not think that it has profoundly influenced politics.

Like me, Harry J. Skornia would dissent, at least mildly, from this comforting conclusion. His *Television and the News** is a series of sober and thorough studies of the way in which news is suppressed and distorted by the great commercial networks of the U.S. He is more sanguine than I am about what might be accomplished under another system, but it is difficult to resist his arguments in favor of professional standards for broadcast journalists.

Michael J. Arlen's television reviews for the *New Yorker* have been collected in *Living-Room War.** It is so rare to find anyone with his intelligence and sensitivity devoting himself to the regular criticism of TV that I hesitate to complain of the *New-Yorker*ish superciliousness and affectation that occasionally mar Arlen's style. The pieces on Vietnam are particularly well done.

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The Price of Community Control

David K. Cohen

LIKE EVERYTHING else in the cities, education seems to defy both management and comprehension. The struggle over urban schools has in recent years grown progressively more ferocious, with the casualties mounting accordingly. Discussions of underachievement and psychological damage have given way to cries of genocide. No longer are anger and criticism confined to the malfeasance of an occasional superintendent; the arena of contention now includes entire educational programs—integration, school improvement, community control—each designed in its own way to remedy conditions in slum schools. Meanwhile, the schools remain segregated, student achievement shows no sign of change, and the distribution of power is no different from what it used to be. Yet while we appear to have been on a treadmill with respect to basic educational reform, the ideological scenery has been going by at a furious rate; at present, the main issue no longer appears to be whether segregation should be eliminated, or more money allocated to schools, but who shall control what exists.

How has this change come about? Until about a year ago, most people would have agreed that the main purpose of school reform was to eliminate racial disparities in educational achievement; this, in turn, was regarded as the best way to reduce racial disparities in jobs and income. The debate, by and large, centered on the question of how the schools should go about accomplishing that task. Many Negroes and white liberals supported an emphasis on integration, arguing that segregated schools impaired motivation and achievement, and thereby damaged Negroes' chances for occupational success and full citizenship. Educators, on the other hand, typically located the problem not in the racial organization of public education but in the intellectual and cultural "deprivation" of Negro children; hence, they advocated educational programs aimed at compensating for those deficiencies.

Recently, two new educational proposals have been advanced—decentralization and community control. In the form in which they were initially made, these proposals did little to disturb the assumptions underlying earlier efforts at reform. Thus, increased accountability to the local community was presented as another way of unlocking a school's potential for raising the educational attainment of its pupils. Although other issues have since arisen, the original claims for decentralization rested on the belief that the traditional "liberal" approaches to school reform—integration and/or compensatory education—had been tried and had failed.

Behind this notion lay three major assumptions. One was that government had in fact redistributed resources—in the form of students, teachers, dollars, or whatever—in order to eliminate the racially unequal distribution of results in schooling. A second was that the programs of integration and compensatory education had been evaluated, and it had been demonstrated that they did not work: i.e., test scores had not changed. Finally, the reason for this failure was perceived to be administrative or political in nature: the school bureaucracy was opposed to reform, the teachers were racist, or the entire structure was hopelessly unresponsive. From these assumptions flowed the conclusion that any new policy proposal—be it bloc grants, administrative decentralization, or community control—must center on transforming fundamental political relationships.

Before taking up the merits of these new proposals, I should like to discuss the assumptions on which they rest. For it is by no means self-evident: a) that liberal programs of educational reform were in fact tried on a significant scale; b) that where they were tried, they failed; or c) that political and administrative change is necessarily a precondition for change in the distribution of educational achievement.

II

HARD EVIDENCE on the effectiveness of educational strategies has never been easy to come by. Until 1966, for example, when the Coleman Report was published,* virtually no direct evidence existed on the relationship between a school's racial composition and how well its students performed. What the Coleman Report revealed turned out to be at some

DAVID K. COHEN, here making his first appearance in COMMENTARY, is an associate professor in the School of Education at Harvard.

* Coleman, James S., *et al., Equality of Educational Opportunity,* Washington, 1966.

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variance with integrationist ideology: Negro students in mostly white schools were indeed higher achievers than those in mostly Negro schools, but this apparently bore no intrinsic relation to a particular school's racial composition. Rather, in those mostly white schools where Negroes performed well, the white students were typically from more advantaged homes; Negro students in a middle-class white school would do no better than Negro students in an equally middle-class Negro school. As a practical matter, integrationists could reassure themselves that the relative lack of a Negro middle class meant that social-class integration would inevitably entail racial integration as well, but in view of this finding they could no longer embrace the notion that a school's racial composition *per se* affected achievement.

Of course, the absence of unequivocal evidence on achievement was never the main obstacle to school integration, and in many communities where integration was tried, achievement gains seem indeed to have followed. In most communities, however, the attempt was never even made. The blame for this may be placed primarily on the indifference, inertia, and opposition of school officials, and on the general political sentiment which they reflected. Although committed educational leadership in places like Berkeley, Evanston, and Syracuse showed that organized white resistance could be overcome, most school systems —in the hundreds of communities whose size and demography put integration within easy reach— never reached that stage. Even fewer efforts were made in the large cities, where national attention was riveted.

Integrationists responded to this situation by devising a strategy which promised to reduce white opposition by coupling integration with a variety of beguiling educational attractions: educational parks, magnet schools, special education centers, and the like. If most white parents, the reasoning went, were forced to choose between inferior all-white schools and educationally superior integrated facilities, they would not hesitate to choose the latter. The problem was that educational innovations are as expensive as school budgets are tight; the strategy required new legislation which would allocate much more money to city schools.

In any event, the strategy was never really tried, since most professional educators chose a different response altogether. They saw that Negro parents wanted better schools and higher achievement, and therefore offered programs of remedial and compensatory education in the existing segregated schools. When this counter-strategy was embodied in local programs, and in Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, it put a premium on the perpetuation of segregated schools. It paid educators to maintain schools in the slums rather than create the integrated, educationally superior facilities envisioned in integrationist rhetoric.

Thus it is incorrect to say that school integration failed; what failed was the politics required to bring it about. Like most liberal strategies for social change, integration is politically viable only on the assumption that it is in the interest of whites to reduce the status disparity between themselves and Negroes. Inducing whites to choose integration by creating educationally irresistible schools was a clever effort to create such an identity of interest. The only flaw was that before white parents could be presented with the choice, vast new funds would have had to be appropriated, with the explicit proviso that they would be used to create these schools. And naturally the money itself could not be obtained without substantial white support. In political terms this meant that in order to make the strategy work one had to presume the prior existence of that very identity of educational interests which the strategy was designed to bring into being. In this case, circular reasoning proved to be as deadly in politics as it usually is in logic: only a few of the integrationists' schools have ever been created.

THE CONCEPT of compensatory education favored by most educators represented an effort to avoid this fatal circularity. Since compensatory programs operated only in slum schools, they seemed indeed to offer a happy political alternative. Whites could assume a progressive stance by supporting improved ghetto education—and better schools for poor whites, too —while opposing or remaining neutral on demands for busing, Princeton plans, and other politically volatile integration tactics. For these reasons—to say nothing of the substantial Negro support the remedial programs enjoyed—a powerful coalition of moderate and liberal reformers and schoolmen came together behind such legislation as Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

How did these programs fare? Over the past two years a succession of evaluations has been unable to find much evidence of improved achievement. To be sure, their sponsors have proclaimed the programs a success: the litanies of praise that have been issued cite improved school conditions, brighter attitudes, better attendance, reduced vandalism, happier teachers, etc. Nonetheless, to judge by the main criterion the programs were designed to satisfy, the general absence of gains in achievement makes all these claims seem trivial or disingenuous.

What accounts for this unhappy record? In a strict sense the question cannot be answered, for as long as we don't know what works, it is impossible to make the comparisons which might suggest the reasons for failure. Comparisons aside, however, one *can* assess in a general way the

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actual impact on slum schools of the millions of federal dollars that have been appropriated for their improvement. Title I increased instructional expenditures for each participating child by about $60 a year in 1966-67, and last year by about $65. Since the nation annually spends an average of about $450 per pupil for instruction, the increment (10 to 15 per cent) from Title I can only be described as modest. The simplest way to figure the amount of educational improvement that an increase like that can buy is in terms of the time a teacher devotes to her children. If a teacher has thirty students and works a five-hour day (and if we imagine that she divides the day into a series of tutorials), then each student recieves a ten-minute daily tutorial. An increase of 10 per cent in the teaching staff would add one minute to the daily individual attention a student receives. That does not exactly constitute an educational revolution.

There is more. For one thing, the compensatory moneys have often been used to make up for existing differences between black and white schools, rather than for creating better-than-equal black schools. For another, the funds made available under Title I frequently have been so dispersed that their budgetary impact—which is clear enough on a balance sheet—is undetectable in the target schools themselves. As a result, in many cases the infusion of money has had the opposite effect from the one intended. If, on the one hand, the funds are concentrated only on the neediest children, a noticeable change does occur in these children's school program, but only for an hour or so a day, or a day a week. Teachers who work in the school but not in the program often become hostile or jealous, and those who do work in the program, since their colleagues are unfriendly and their students unsuccessful, grow frustrated and discouraged. They explode and leave, or somehow adjust cynically to the situation; neither reaction is particularly productive. If, on the other hand, the funds are diffused widely over a variety of children and schools, intense frustration on the part of a few teachers is traded off for a more generalized low level of despondency or indifference. Then there is the added problem of turnover in both teaching staff and in the programs themselves, which occurs partly as a result of the conditions I have just outlined, partly for political or administrative reasons. Continuity is rare and knowledge non-cumulative: the same basic lessons are often learned over and over again, either by new teachers in the same program, or by the same teachers in new programs. No one benefits perceptibly.

There have been a few experiments which involved rather larger sums than those provided by Title I, but here too one would be hard put to say unequivocally that they resulted in improved achievement. Some interpretations of evidence from the More Effective Schools program in New York City, for example, suggest that there may have been achievement gains for children who were exposed to the program over long periods of time, but other interpretations suggest the opposite; similarly with the tutoring program conducted by New York's Mobilization for Youth and a few other programs. In all cases, reports of improvement are open to serious question.

FINALLY THERE are pre-school programs, which vary in content and direction from traditional classroom situations, to parent-training programs, to programs giving individual attention to two-year-olds. A number of these programs have reported substantial gains. Two things, however, should be noted about them. The first is that the gains appear to dissipate quickly if things are allowed to return to normal; the second is that those programs which are school-centered are very expensive, costing between $1,000 and $1,500 per child per annum. Now, research on pre-school education seems to indicate that it is indeed possible, although it is by no means easy, to affect patterns of intellectual development if pervasive changes in a child's environment are instituted a good deal earlier than the age at which schooling now begins, and if they are continued on into the elementary school years. But the prospect of undertaking such a course of action raises many problems in its turn. One of these relates to the political and cultural implications of further extending the schools' dominion over children; I will take this up later. Another is suggested by the price that is likely to be exacted for such reform: if the cost of improving achievement will be an additional one or two thousand dollars per pupil per year, and if our main goal is to eliminate racial disparities in adult income and occupation, then why not spend the money directly on family income maintenance, or on creating socially useful and important jobs? Perhaps the best way to change existing inequalities in income and occupation is to change them, not to use schooling as a means of deferring reform.

The costliness of programs of intensive education in early childhood is politically crucial in another way, too, for a ghettoized approach to school improvement assumes that whites will trade off the programs' cost for the maintenance of segregation. Although to some extent that is doubtless true, there is no guarantee that the commitment of whites to existing patterns of segregation will stretch to the point where they would be willing to spend on black children two or three times what is typically spent on whites. It is precisely here that the "failure" of compensatory education resides. As a recent publication of the U. S. Office of Education dolefully pointed out, a really serious effort in compensatory education would ". . . require a mobilization effort more far-reaching than any now en-

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visioned by any community." It would, in other words, imply a level of white support for ghetto development which—in light of the past eight years' experience—is as difficult to conceive as the amount of white support that would be required for integration.

III

WHAT HAS failed, then, is not the traditional "liberal" educational technologies—whether of the integrationist or compensatory variety; these technologies have been tried too sporadically and haphazardly to permit of careful assessment. Rather, the deficiency lies in the absence of operational political strategies which would bind up the interests of blacks and whites in such a way as to elicit white support for programs that would improve the relative status of black children. That is a primitive political defect, an inability to apply what might be called the politics of common interest to basic social reform.

But if it is incorrect to say that integration and compensatory education have been tried and found wanting, politically it all seems to amount to the same thing: the relative educational status of Negro and white children in metropolitan areas is little different now from what it was in 1954. The persistence of this dreary contrast has in recent years provided a major impetus to movements for decentralization and community control.

Decentralization and community control refer to a variety of notions about schooling and school reform, not all of them related to the problem of disparities in achievement. One of these is that the potentially effective components of city school systems—parents, teachers, and inquisitive children—are walled off from each other by a Byzantine bureaucratic maze; before the elements can function to the children's best advantage, the argument runs, the walls must be broken down and the bureaucracy brought under control. Another view is that the entire educational system is racist, from the way it allocates resources, to the attitudes of its teachers and the character of its textbooks; according to this view the remedy is not to make the system more accessible but to transfer control of the enterprise altogether: until the schools are operated by the parents of their young black clients (or those who legitimately stand *in loco parentis*), they will not be responsive to the needs of Negro children. A third view is that the problem resides in the psychological consequences of powerlessness. As things now stand, it is argued, the central fact of life for black Americans is that they do not control their personal and collective destinies. All the significant ghetto institutions—schools, government, welfare, etc.—are controlled by whites. Unless these whites are replaced by Negroes, black children will lack a sense that the world will respond to their efforts, and their achievement will languish as a consequence. The last two ideas roughly comprise the meaning of community control, the first, decentralization.

Of the three, the notion that the root problem is bureaucracy probably has the broadest appeal. For one thing, the complexity and unresponsiveness of many big-city school systems is legendary; no client of any class or color happily accepts the reign of the clerk, and increasing numbers reject the inflexible style and pedagogy of the schools. For another, we have long been accustomed to the idea that the very size of institutions inevitably produces a kind of social arteriosclerosis, and assume that the remedy lies not in reaming out the conduits, but in reducing the distance between the vital organs and the extremities. Finally, the anti-bureaucratic critique is almost always couched in irresistible contrasts between extreme situations—Scarsdale as opposed to Bedford-Stuyvesant, or Winnetka as opposed to the West Side of Chicago.

Unfortunately, however, there is no evidence that the level of parent participation in schools is related to students' achievement. It is true that parents in suburban communities are somewhat more likely to participate in school affairs than those in central cities, but this seems to have more to do with the consequences of affluence than with anything else; analysis of the data in the Coleman Report fails to reveal any association between the level of parental participation and achievement. Nor is there any evidence that smaller school districts—which we all presume to be less bureaucratized and more responsive to parents and children—produce higher levels of achievement than larger ones. With a few outstanding exceptions, public education in the U.S. runs on the assumption that administrative decentralization, small and homey school districts, and local control are educational essentials; literally thousands of school jurisdictions stand as testimony to this creed, against only a handful of urban monoliths. Yet here again there appears to be no relation whatsoever between the size of a school district (or whether its board is elected or appointed) and the achievement of the students in its schools.

On the other hand, there is abundant evidence that parents who are involved in a direct way in their children's education tend to have children who achieve at higher levels. Involvement of this sort includes reading to children, taking them to libraries, talking to them, explaining things, and otherwise providing lots of cognitive stimulation and support for intellectual accomplishment. Thus, when poor parents are trained to behave toward their children in the way middle-class parents do, the children's level of achievement rises. This should not come as a surprise, except perhaps to those hardy souls who believe that the intellectual deprivation associat-

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ed with poverty can be traced exclusively to genetic makeup. It does, however, argue for the establishment of parent-training efforts, like the one that has been operating in Ypsilanti, Michigan, rather than programs aimed at eliminating bureaucracy in schools.

Advocates of community control (as opposed to administrative decentralization) might raise the objection here that the source of underachievement is not bureaucratic inertia in the first place, but institutional racism. There is, in fact, no dearth of evidence that city school systems discriminate against the poor in general and Negroes in particular. Studies of resource allocation almost always reveal that predominantly black schools suffer by comparison with white schools, in terms of such things as teacher experience, tenure, and certification. In addition, the attitudes of many teachers are influenced by class and racial antagonisms; in the Coleman sample of Northern urban elementary schools, between 10 and 20 per cent of teachers in ghetto schools overtly expressed a preference for schools with all or nearly all white student bodies. It should be noted, however, that Negro children whose teachers are as good as or better than the average for whites and have better than average racial attitudes, do not show higher achievement than their less fortunate counterparts in ghetto schools.

Here it may be countered that it is not a teacher's racial attitudes which affect performance, but his expectations of his students' academic success. And indeed, this idea appears to make intuitive good sense. It seems reasonable to believe that bigoted white teachers—or Negroes who accept white stereotypes—will somehow communicate to their students the sense that black children are academically less capable. If that is so, then it might well follow that the most efficient way to deal with such teachers, short of large-scale psychotherapy, would be to sharpen dramatically their responsibility to the parents of Negro children, on the theory that they would then have to shape up or ship out.

Let us assume for the moment that this hypothesis is correct.* Let us also grant that community control would transform academic expectations that have been distorted over the years by bigotry or brainwashing. Would it also eliminate underachievement in ghetto schools? The latter is unlikely, for most achievement differences appear to be related not to a student's race or to his school's racial composition, but to factors having to do with social class. Correcting the consequences of racist distortions in teachers' expectancies is not the same thing as correcting the vast class differentials which produce differences in achievement in the first place. The notion that bigoted teachers depress the academic performance of black children is based on the premise that these teachers fail accurately to perceive and/or to act upon the children's real potential, *because the children are black*. Yet it has been shown that differences in achievement are of roughly the same magnitude at grade six or nine as they are at the time children enter school, and are relatively insensitive to variations in *anything* about schools. All the research of the last four decades points to the conclusion that differences in nutrition, general health, and access to intellectual and cognitive stimulation—which, of course, vary widely by social and economic status, and therefore by race—are the chief environmental determinants of children's intellectual performance. Eliminating racial distortions in teacher expectations would improve ghetto education, but it would probably not eliminate disparities in achievement that are ultimately due to differences in social class.

Both of the theories that I have discussed so far suffer from the obvious defect of presuming that schools have an impact upon students' achievement, when most evidence on this point tends in the opposite direction. The third—the fate-control theory—does not so presume. Its premise is the notion that the central educational problem for black children is not poor pedagogy, but powerlessness, a political condition in the ghetto which is not at all unique to the schools. Now, it takes only a modicum of political insight to notice that Negroes do not control most of the institutions which directly affect their lives, and little ideological originality to argue that hence they are a subject people, dominated in colonial fashion by a foreign white ruling class. This argument has been advanced with increasing strength since World War II, but until publication of the Coleman Report there was no way to link the political fact of powerlessness with students' performance in school. One of that report's major findings, however, was that the extent to which black students felt they could master their destiny was a powerful determinant of their achievement, more important than all the measures of family, social, and economic status combined.

That provided the necessary link. If a student's sense of environment control strongly influenced his achievement, black control of ghetto schools, it seemed to follow, would produce a sense of personal efficacy which would in turn lead to improved performance. The idea now enjoys enormous popularity, primarily because it seems entirely consistent with reality. First of all, political and cultural emasculation has been

* It has been argued most persuasively by Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson in *Pygmalion in the Classroom* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 256 pp., $3.95). In a review published in the *American Educational Research Journal* (November 1968), Robert L. Thorndike cast serious doubt on the authors' research.

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a dominant element of the black experience in America. Secondly, all the precedents of American ethnic history are supposed to demonstrate that group political and economic solidarity is the touchstone of personal status and mobility. Finally, it seems to make eminent sense that people who feel in control of their destiny will be high achievers; the sense of mastery leads to mastery.

But try it the other way: mastery leads to the sense of mastery; high achievers are more likely to have a stronger sense of environment control than low achievers. It sounds just as persuasive one way as the other, a perplexity which is amply reflected in research. Some studies suggest that the sense of efficacy causes achievement, some suggest that it works the other way around, and others find no association whatsoever. We have no studies of the relationship between parents' political efficacy (or their sense thereof) and their children's test scores; the few studies that relate parents' general sense of environment control to their children's achievement are inconclusive and contradictory. Here as elsewhere, the results of scientific research provide a firm basis for nothing but further research.

IN SUMMARY: a good deal has been made of the various ways in which decentralization and community control will improve achievement, but a review of what we know turns up confused, contradictory, or discouraging evidence. This does not mean that greater participation, less bureaucracy, greater openness, and more accountability are not worthwhile goals; I happen to think they are crucial. In my view, however, these are essentially political and administrative issues, and one's assessment of their significance or desirability should be determined by theory and evidence particular to those realms of experience. The one thing my brief review of the educational evidence *does* mean is this: if one were guided solely by research on achievement and attitudes, one would not employ community control or decentralization as the devices most likely to reduce racial disparities in achievement.

IV

BUT THE gathering momentum for community control and decentralization is unlikely to be diminished by this news. On the contrary, advocates of these policies argue that evidence derived from the existing situation is not simply inadequate but altogether inapplicable. More important, the major pressures for decentralization and community control now have less to do with the failure of educational strategies than with the failure of what I referred to earlier as the politics of common interest.

As a historical matter, it is of course true that one of the underlying causes of the movement for community control has been the persistence of racial disparities in achievement. Yet the nature of the current situation is best illustrated by the fact that within the last year, the persistence of these disparities has not simply produced more militant demands for higher achievement but has created a profound crisis of authority in ghetto schools, a sense that these schools lack legitimacy as educational institutions. This feeling is strongest among Negroes—especially the young, the activists, and the professionals—but it is reinforced by the many middle- and upper-middle-class whites who reject the public schools' regimentation and authoritarianism for other reasons. For some blacks and whites, the notion that only parents and community residents are legitimately empowered to operate schools rests on what is taken to be the objective inadequacy of those in authority; scarcely anyone with access to print denies that the schools have failed to correct ghetto educational problems. Repeated for years, this assertion has led effortlessly to the idea that the established agencies lack the special competence upon which most educational authority is assumed to rest.

There is, however, more to the crisis of authority than that. The illegitimacy of ghetto education is more and more often proclaimed to reside not in the failure of that education to produce achievement equal to that of white schools—had it done so, according to the earlier logic, the criterion of legitimacy need never have been challenged—but in the defective nature of the social contract between black and white America. One manifestation of this position is the attack that has been launched on the instruments—achievement test results, rates of college acceptance, etc.—typically used to determine if the older, "rational" criterion of authority was being satisfied; not only that, but the intellectual and cultural content of those instruments has been dismissed as irrelevant or antithetical to the black community's political and cultural aspirations. A second, and politically more explosive, manifestation of this view is the assertion that school officials and teachers whose ideas or activities suggest the absence of political and cultural identification with the black community therefore also lack the qualifications requisite to educate black children. This is entirely consistent with the new criterion of authority, which assumes that the task of educators in the ghettos is to establish the basis for a valid social contract between Negroes and the institutions in their communities. Hence it becomes not at all strange to substitute for the old, "rational" tests of educational competence a subjective test of political consensus, for in a sense the situation is presumed to have reverted to the precontract state of nature, wherein the main issue is one of defining the body politic that is about to come into being, and deciding who shall be its citizens.

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This "anti-colonial" position is, in the technically correct sense of the term, revolutionary; it asserts that the established authorities and the principles upon which their dominion rests are fundamentally and irreparably illegitimate, and that the only way they can continue to command is by the use of naked power. In such a situation the minimum task of the revolutionary is to bring that fact into the open, to "expose" the illegitimacy by provoking the authorities to violence.

Although only a relatively few Negroes consciously hold this position, their political strength is multiplied enormously by the fact that there are *very* few who explicitly hold the opposite view. Most blacks have an acute sense of the injustice which white society has visited upon them, so that if white authorities should attempt to suppress an openly revolutionary cadre, the best response they could hope for from the general community would be one of sullen hostility. In the case of the struggle over the schools, this makes it functionally impossible to distinguish those who want community control as a means of fulfilling the achievement criterion from those who want it as the basis for a new social contract. The two groups will remain pretty much identical so long as the achievement criterion remains unsatisfied.

It is easy to see why the anti-colonial position is anathema to the established authorities. Among other things, in selecting school personnel advocates of this position seek to substitute what amounts to a test of political loyalty for a series of universalistic "professional" standards. In last year's school dispute in New York, for example, the Ocean Hill Board was accused of racism and of violating due-process guarantees for teachers, but whether or not this was true, the real issue was the Board's effort to apply a test of political consensus to educators. Since—as in Africa—there are always whites who can pass such a test, the Ocean Hill Board could maintain that it was not guilty of racism at the same time that it sought to expel teachers for what *it* called racism—i.e., non-consensus.

BUT WHATEVER the local variations, the crucial fact is that the crisis in urban education is passing into a phase in which only a change in the locus of authority will bring peace. How long the present transition period will last is hard to say, but the main elements of the domestic political situation appear to favor an increase rather than a diminishing of the anti-colonial impulse. Those elements include: the inability of the liberal/labor/civil-rights coalition to secure legislation that would mount a broad and basic attack upon black-white disparities in income and occupation; an unprecedented (but hardly unheralded) upsurge of black nationalism; the emergence of a black professional class in Northern cities as a political force.

Since the collapse of the Johnsonian consensus on domestic affairs, which can be roughly dated to the 1966 White House Conference "To Fulfill These Rights," these three elements have come into high relief, reinforcing one another. After the White House Conference, it became increasingly clear that Congressional liberals were light-years away from the political strength required to legislate fundamental change in the economic and social status of Negroes. The resources lost to the war effort in Vietnam were of course partly to blame, but there was more to it than that: as the White House Conference report suggested, fundamental change would require social spending on an absolutely unprecedented scale. Even without a war in Vietnam the Congressional struggle would have been titanic in its proportions; it was clearly impossible under conditions of large-scale defense spending.

In the cities, therefore, where no real effort has been made to deal with the underlying problems of jobs and income, attention remains where it has been since 1954. The schools are visible and accessible, in the sense that the political nexus of employment and housing is not; their performance has been obviously out of harmony with the ideology of education expounded by all moderates and liberals since *Brown vs. Board of Education*; and the inability in the last decade to effect widespread educational reforms has insured that existing frustrations would grow as performance fell farther and farther behind expectations.

AS A RESULT, the primary urban activity since late 1967 has been a struggle for the division and control of what already exists. Although one may argue that this is a rational response if one believes there is no hope for new social legislation, it has the notable drawback of creating political divisions which even further diminish the likelihood of such legislation. The greatest division of this kind has occurred between Negroes and white liberals. (To be sure, the peace between them had never been easy. Aside from the inevitable element of paternalism—whites in the movement were cooperating to solve what was typically seen as "the Negro problem"—there was the problem generated by rivalry for jobs and leadership once the movement began to score some successes.) In the recent disasters in New York City, many of the same white liberals who had championed the cause of civil rights suddenly found themselves under attack because they happened to inhabit those institutions toward which urban Negroes were now turning with hungry eyes. In a sense, the social-welfare bureaucracies—schools, welfare, anti-poverty programs—were the least strategic places to attack. They have, after all, been among the most liberal institutions, they have a common interest with blacks in the expansion of social-welfare legislation, and they are

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typically populated by whites who are noticeably more liberal than the average. But they were close at hand, they were the institutions Negroes knew about, they were (or seemed) easier to approach than others more remote and conservative, they were located in the ghettos rather than downtown, and they were even sympathetic to the situation which produced the movement for black control.

Add to this the politicization of the cultural and psychological upsurge known as black nationalism, which began in the mid-1960's and was well underway long before black power became a political and ideological reality. Renewed interest on the part of blacks in Afro-American culture and "Negritude" produced basic and legitimate demands upon white America, in the schools and elsewhere. The written materials of education are typically bigoted, and there is virtually no important aspect of public education in the cities, from the distribution of money to the attitudes of teachers, which is untouched by discrimination or racial antagonism. These problems, however, are as amenable to remedy by integration as by black separatism.

But in the absence of genuine integration, or of much evidence of fundamental economic and social change, nationalism became wedded to the demand for a piece of the action, and was forged into a program for change. This is not the place to argue the merits of the position as a general matter; what is important is that black nationalism offered a system of ideas which seemed to correspond with the interests of the emerging class of black professionals, and to explain the need for black community control. Even in itself integration is a difficult path: it promises strain, tension, and unfamiliarity to black and white administrators and teachers equally, and hence it has never inspired real enthusiasm except among a few. Community control, on the other hand, avoids these pitfalls. It offers concrete gains long overdue—jobs and promotion to administrative and supervisory positions, without the accompanying discomfort of venturing into foreign schools and neighborhoods—under the ideological aegis of assisting in the development of one's own community. A more perfect coincidence of ideology and self-interest can hardly be imagined.

The coming-of-age of the black professional class, a potent aspect of the struggle for community control, may turn out in the end to be the most important element in the battle over the schools, more significant than the substitution of parent for citywide boards, or community for bureaucratic control. The enfranchisement of a black elite, long overdue, should indeed help to improve education. In the short run, however, it has poured fuel on an already raging fire. Frustration, hostility, ambition, and concern for children long neglected is a potent combination, especially when applied generously to the complicated gear-works of big-city civil-service labor relations. The results have been spread depressingly over more editions of the New York *Times* than one cares to contemplate. As the struggle continues—and it surely will—the Lindsays of the world will seek to maintain civil peace—and their positions—by accommodating as many black demands for a slice of the action as they find possible, while the Albert Shankers will seek to maintain life by holding on to what they have. In so doing, the Lindsays will find themselves alienating lower-class and sometimes liberal white constituents, and the Shankers will find themselves making alliances with and concessions to conservative elements. The liberals will find themselves in the position of having to defend those portions of the social-welfare bureaucracies they control against black demands; all they can do, aside from hanging on for dear life, is to assume a principled position against segregation and for the application of vastly greater resources. However one may sympathize with that position, it is no more likely to be useful in the next day's struggle to keep afloat politically than it is either to reduce segregation or to increase the available resources.

V

Is there a way out of our present morass? The difficulty here is twofold. One might still imagine that a massive assault on status disparities would shift attention away from the question of legitimacy, but it is hard to conceive of such an assault being mounted. Producing the needed legislation would require sustained political mobilization of blacks and whites, a prospect which seems remote so long as: a) they are so fatally preoccupied with each other; b) new money cannot be found to reduce the competition and allow recruitment of a broader constituency; and c) many powerful whites and ambitious blacks, for their separate reasons, prefer a political settlement to economic and social justice.

I do not mean to imply, however—and this is the second difficulty—that the way out would be clear if only more resources were available. That, unfortunately, is only the converse of the argument for decentralization: it makes no more sense to pretend that removing social and economic disparities will solve all the problems of city schools than to argue that political rearrangement will eliminate achievement disparities. The point can be conveniently illustrated: the liberal ideology of educational improvement tells us that since schooling is the least divisive and best way to insure equal chances for jobs and income, we should provide more of it for Negroes. School reforms based on this notion typically include heavy doses of those disciplined activities which are thought to yield high scores on achievement

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tests. But the same middle-class liberals who advocate this medicine for the poor often cannot stomach administering it to *their* children; they enroll them instead in more open, permissive, and pedagogically diversified private schools. This paradox suggests in practice what many advocates of school reform cannot admit as a matter of principle: that there exists presently a fundamental tension between the sorts of educational changes which are thought to improve achievement, and those designed to diversify pedagogy, reduce routine, and allow for individual and cultural creativity.

As an ideological matter, school reformers have dealt with this tension by placing exclusive stress on either diversity or achievement; the practical political consequence has been to behave as though solving one problem would solve the other. Many liberals have therefore supported programs designed to extend the dominion of the schools over children's lives, and have advocated such things as twelve-month school years, preschools and kindergarten for all, afternoon school centers, and the like. Under any circumstances serious questions could be raised about the desirability of a further intrusion of state institutions into a child's cultural and intellectual development; given the current circumstances—in which the institutions in question suffer from an advanced form of political, cultural, and pedagogical atrophy—the problems are terrific. Although one can easily imagine a program of extended schooling being executed well, with concern for diversity and individuality, there is a big difference between what one can imagine and what one can actually do with the materials at hand. The extension of schooling means the extension of the schooling that happens to exist, as the history of Headstart and Title I—to say nothing of the compulsory education movement—makes abundantly clear. Thus, liberals who advocate such measures run the risk of overtly or covertly subverting other educational values they hold dear.

In the case of decentralization—as the recent events in New York reveal—the same insistence on unitary solutions to separate problems has led to the widespread idea that political and administrative change will remedy racial achievement differences, an idea which, as I have tried to show, flies in the face of all past experience and knowledge concerning the determinants of achievement. As for the aim of creating diversity in the schools, decentralization and community control can be described only as half-hearted and incomplete attempts in that direction.

Consider the various proposals for decentralizing the New York City schools. All, from the Bundy plan to the most radical proposals for community control, assume that the necessary and sufficient condition for producing diversity is the imposition of new control on existing institutions and resources. But this amounts to nothing more than a system of educational laissez-faire, which is hardly the same thing as diversity, especially when schools are segregated by race and class. In the competition for school resources, the net effect of such a system would be to institutionalize the political disadvantages of blacks and poor people, isolate them in the competition for money, and thereby establish in custom, law, and administrative code those failures of the politics of common interest which led to the demands for control in the first place.

More important, however, is the fact that the need for diversity—for alternative cultural and pedagogic styles in schooling—cannot be satisfied by racial division or changes in administrative structure alone. Diversity and excellence in schools are qualities not likely to appear unless a premium is put upon them. Creating such diversity would entail the recruitment of new people to education, and new institutions to schooling: not just neighborhood boards, but universities, labor unions, churches, and voluntary associations formed for the purpose of education. The business of attracting, organizing, funding, and maintaining such institutions cannot be accomplished by further provincializing the existing structure, any more than regulating it can be left to essentially free competition.

Real diversity would be costly both politically and fiscally, and would require a somewhat different view of the relationship between the state and the schools from the one now regnant. At the moment we think of the state not only as the sole regulator of public education, but as exclusive operator of the schools; this greatly restricts, for political and constitutional reasons, the extent to which the schools can be diverse. Were the state to continue its role as regulator but take less of a hand in actually running the schools, greater diversity might be possible; under such conditions the state would concern itself with maintaining essential principles of interest regulation, civil liberties, civil rights, and educational standards.

The form that such an arrangement would take is uncertain. There have been proposals to put money on the heads of children—or in the pockets of their parents—but they raise problems related to segregation, and to the well-known fact that the poor usually exercise choice in a less strategic fashion than do the affluent. Another proposal has been to create alternative *institutions*; this might obviate the problem of choice to a certain extent, but like the tuition proposals, it raises questions about the interests of parties that are presently involved in the educational enterprise.

All these alternative proposals deserve careful consideration, whether one is concerned with pedagogy, political participation, or the possibilities for a democratic culture. They deserve con-

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sideration not only as to their intrinsic merits, but because they serve as a counterbalance to the idea that diversity and openness in the schools can be produced solely through political arrangements designed to settle an authority crisis arising from long-standing grievances of quite another sort. One might also hope that a discussion of these issues would contribute to repairing some of the deep political divisions within the democratic Left. These fissures have sprung in part from the fact that organizations and individuals that would in a more civilized atmosphere have tended to take different stands on different issues —racial identity, pedagogic diversity, political participation, reduction of racial disparities in income and occupation—have in the current climate been forced to take a single stand on all at once. The resulting schizophrenia has been widely displayed in the columns of all serious publications which either originate in or recognize the existence of New York City.

Finally, attention to alternative forms of education might help to set in clear relief another idea currently simmering at the edges of the liberal political consciousness, namely that the best way to reduce racial disparities in children's school achievement might be to reduce the disparities in their parents' social and economic status. Support for this notion, as I pointed out earlier, arises from a variety of considerations: the dependence of achievement on parental status; the potential political, cultural, and emotional dangers of extending the system of schooling that now exists; the inherent risks of presuming that profound social change can be purchased cheaply with a bit of improved schooling.

VI

It should be plain by now that I myself am persuaded by the soundness of this analysis, yet I am also aware that its intellectual cogency is strongly and negatively related to its chances for political life and prosperity. We are presently at an important crossroad, both in education and in race relations, and the path we take will probably influence the shape of things for many, many years. Roughly speaking, the issue is how to settle an increasingly severe crisis of authority. On the one hand, by carving up existing institutions and resources in such a way as to arrange a viable contract between blacks and the institutions in their neighborhoods, we can work out a political settlement of the tensions that have arisen from a long-standing failure to remedy basic social and economic injustice. Thereby, perhaps, we can purchase peace, or, if not peace, at least the confinement of the conflict and noise within the ghetto. On the other hand, we can resolve the authority crisis by attacking the fundamental disparities which produced it.

It would be easy to overestimate in alarmist fashion the consequences of choosing the easier path; a good deal of this has unfortunately already been done. It would be silly, or worse, to argue that educational disaster will ensue from whatever decentralization and community control can be politically arranged. There will be problems, but there are problems now. It seems to me much more likely that under community control the basic disparities would remain more or less intact, while the atmosphere and conduct of the schools would show improvement.

A good deal has also been said to the effect that the movements for decentralization and community control are provoking a general rightward trend in American politics. That such a trend exists is clear, and it also seems reasonable to believe that it feeds upon the wilder and more vociferous elements in the movement for community control. But we should remember that this trend was first noticed years ago as a reaction to the movement for *integration*, and that it probably manifests the underlying reality of white attitudes in a limited-resource situation, not a response to particular strategies. It is unhappy and frustrating to witness the present spiral of distrust, and the struggle for control of what exists; these contribute their share to the general poisoning of the political atmosphere. But they are symptoms of the underlying political weakness, not its primary cause.

Of the two alternatives, it takes no great vision to see where the political chips lie. The second alternative is costly, whether we measure cost in dollars allocated, status lost, stereotypes shattered, or political effort expended. The first has a certain political price—as the convulsions in New York revealed—but it gives the appearance of costing little otherwise. In addition to this enormous political advantage, it has behind it the gathering momentum of profound changes in black politics, culture, and society. Although the politicization of these forces, and their arrangement behind the banner of community control, results chiefly from the failure of the society at large to deal directly with social and economic inequality, political facts cannot be wished away, either by dreams of what might have been or strategies on paper about what might be: unless the inequalities are swiftly attacked, these forces will not be denied.

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Thanksgiving

A Story

Morris Hedges

"I WANT cherry soda," said Sol.

"What! *Cold stuff?*" said Abe.

He cares something? thought Sonia. An aidem a shtik hults, vus er vaist fon sahn' linke pedeshva. On soda Sol would fill up—the meat he'd leave over.

"Is the beer hot enough yet, Mrs. M?" said Leo.

After the others had sat down in the dining room, she had taken the three bottles out of the refrigerator and put them behind the phone on the kitchen sideboard. One glass, and Sam would be running to the toilet twenty-four hours, the whole day his driblets would float: a manager *(you get burned on hot?—you blow on cold)! here* a penny he knew to save—he had to keep flushing? they could wait for next time. So who suffered in the end?

"I want more skin too," said Sol when she came back. He tilted the heavy chair, grinning up from his book; but to get at the foam before it fizzed out, he brought the chair down, and the outside leg scraped her right shin and hit her ankle. Sonia let out a yell and threw her hands to the top of her head.

"Ox!" said Ben.

Abe stood up the gushing bottle.

Reba felt his other hand. "What did he do, hon?"

"He reads!" said Becky.

"You'll get far screaming," Leo said to Sonia. "Sit down in the kitchen and we'll take a look at you."

"He reads? or he dreams?" said Ben. "Better a blind mule! Who reads when he eats?"

"Who talks when he chews?" Becky picked at her cheek.

"You'll learn him yet, Becky!" said Abe.

Sam came running in from the store; the door banged against the piano.

"Vair hut gekvitchet? Eppes I heard a kvitch. It's time I can eat?"

"Vair derharget! Oyzvorf—you don't get enough to eat? *You* slave over the stove, you march off to the auction all day you loaf?"

"Nobody needs you here," said Leo. "Go back in the store."

Sonia stepped up to the kitchen on her left foot and sat down by the stove. Becky moved another chair over for her, and Sonia put her foot up on it, but her fingers were shaking and she couldn't untie the shoelace.

"Let me," said Becky. "Sonia, lean back, relax."

Sonia lay back against the chair licking her lips and swallowing, while Becky took off the heavy iron-arched shoe.

"What happened?" said Sam.

"Your son Thomas Wolfe the genius," said Ben, "he can't sit like a human being? your wife has a leg now you'll see what happened."

"Thomas Wolfe never wore such well-fitting shoes," said Abe.

Sonia pulled back her dress and petticoat to unclasp the stockings on the leg. She started them down and moved the dress back over her knee. Becky slid off the outer stocking. Under that was a white cotton stocking, and under that a full-length elastic bandage. No blood had come through.

"I can do it," said Sonia. With her apron she wiped her throat and the back of her neck. She unclasped the bandage and began to unwind and roll it.

"She didn't do enough yet your mother?" said Ben. "You want it she should have a gangrene yet?"

"I only wanted more skin."

"What can I do I don't have no more skin? Tear from me pieces, you'll have skin."

She sat back to rest, holding the roll of bandage on her lap.

"Will you cut it out, you little moron?" said Leo. "Reba, can you lift a finger once in your life?"

Reba finished the unwinding and rolling. There was no blood. No one there but Sam had seen the bare leg in years. The lower half was purple, green, black, and silver. The bulging veins stuck out here and there like peas.

"Nu?" said Sonia. "You wanted a rose? A beauty, hah? It's something to see."

She stroked the leg lightly where she could feel that it had been hit.

"A bunch of cheapies," said Ben.

"So it's all right?" said Becky. "Gott sei dank."

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"She likes to holler," said Sam.

"Take a walk, Pop," said Leo.

Abe said: "What are you doing now for your leg in general, Mom?"

"I'm doing! It's a difference what I'm doing?"

"Oh, mother," said Reba, "what did Abe do? Let him alone. Hon, sit down and finish. We're late as it is, we have to go."

"So take an airplane and go! *We're late!* I'm a steam engine?"

"What do you want to be like that for, dear? We have time."

"Your pitsutsa you're asking?" Ben laughed. "You don't know her yet?"

"What's there to know? Is it my fault if she wants to kill herself? It's Leo she waits on hand and foot, not me. Doesn't the doctor tell her to stay off her feet? Talk to the wall."

"*Stay off her feet!* And who'll cook? Who'll clean? Seven o'clock I'm up, when I took last a drop water in mouth you know? You want a Yankee, the whole day she can sit in the beauty parlor, all night plays cards?—so go, by her a leg you won't find."

"For Christ sake," said Leo, "is there one sane person in this house? Does your leg hurt?"

"What else—it's a picnic?"

"I'm not asking that. Do you see anything new wrong with it? Do you want me to call Simkus?"

"I don't call him I'm better off."

"Then stop looking at your leg all night and feeling sorry for yourself. Cut out the crap and sit down and eat."

"Shah, shah. What are you eating yourself up for? I'll sit down yet—you're findished I'll sit down."

"Do you want me to put the bandage back on for you?" said Reba.

"I can do it." Sonia took the bandage, and Reba went back to the dining room.

"So the leg feels all right?" said Becky.

"It feels! I'm retired already? A window-cleaner fifty cents a week, I shouldn't have to climb, my husband can afford?"

"Zi ziecht zich," said Sam. "We have in a girl twice a week she don't say. She likes to talk."

"Bandit! Somebody asked you?" Sonia fanned her neck with her apron. "An hour after school —she gets something done?"

"She wants to be crazy, let her."

"I thought I told you to walk, Pop," said Leo. "You didn't finish your daily quota of fairy tales. ''Chu' gelaizt hant fun a mahn in Roosland vus er iz a hindret un fiftsig yoor alt: er trinkt nisht kin milich fun a ki—er trinkt milich fun a kutz!'"

"Bigger heads from me read the Jewish paper. I'm a Jew—I read the Jewish paper."

SONIA STARED at the linoleum a minute before she began winding the bandage around her instep. It hurt *him* she had a leg? Something happened to her he'd see soon how smart he was. It wasn't for her, on Carpentner Avenue he'd be now? Ask him who bought stones in a suitcase in the railroad station. On Water Street every week what they took in Saturday she made him put it away.

"Honey! Will you please come in and eat?"

Abe stepped down into the dining room.

"Remember—the doctor said no carbonated water. I'm going to take good care of your stomach, aren't I, honey?"

In the kitchen Leo said: "Here's your chance to be a sport for a change, Ben. Treat your big sister to the movies tonight."

Leo had taken his parents to *The Jazz Singer*, and he had taken Sonia to the stage productions of *The Student Prince* and *Show Boat*. (Sam never saw another movie; until Sol was sixteen, whenever he went to the Argosy, even on Saturday afternoons, Sam walked the eight blocks with him, through the Negro section, walked home and walked back to meet him at the appointed time, but never went in. There was no family car, then or ever.)

"Now you said something. Sonia—you hear? You'll go?"

"Ain klainikait! Nur movies ligt mir in kup. Ask if I have time? The clothes who'll get together, tomorrow morning the laundryman comes?"

"If Ben had to drive you to the hospital now, would you have time? Will you have time to go to your funeral?"

Sonia spit. "Funerals goor! He comes in with funerals!"

"Look at her," said Leo. "She spits on the floor."

"Haw! A barroom lady," said Ben.

"A real barbarian. She's as bad as Pop."

"You came in—A spit. You don't give a spit on the floor?"

"She's embarrassed. . . . One night a year you can take off—it won't kill you."

"*You* want to go? Go, gezinterhait."

"Is there a law you have to hide in the kitchen like an animal in a cave?"

"Vaimen hart es? *Honey* and *bunny* I need it?"

"Once I could enjoy a show—no more," said Becky.

"So don't go to the movies—I got a better idea: surprise Mrs. Blumberg tonight. She's been here fifty times. Why does everybody always have to come to see *you*? *You* go to *her* for once."

"She's by her son today."

"So take a walk across the street and see Mrs. Hoffman."

"A glick hut mich oongechupt! She ever comes to me? Eppes a naye zach, Mrs. Hoffman goor—zi pisht mit boymel. I need her?"

"Do you need anybody? Do you need anything? You're a pip! It's not your leg that's the problem —it's your head! I knew you were insane a long time ago! Why don't you see a psychiatrist?"

"Zul Gut oophieten! A psychiatrist yet! Aza

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fake! Who would pay him should go first to the crazy house."

She stayed where they knew her. Alone, the soul is clean as a bone. What she needed it? A man he didn't fill the auctioneer's pocket she should be on Easy Street his wife with two maids. Which he had the sense to dress a window she didn't need to climb in and out it got dark before her eyes. *He* ever changed a window? The goods could rot and the glass could be covered with flyshit—it bothered him? He wouldn't budge.

"Are you *ever* wrong? Give yourself a break for God sake!"

Leo went back to the dining room.

"Come, Sonia," said Becky, "we can go see the Blintzes tonight. You and Sam sit down and eat, then we'll wash the dishes one-two-three."

"It'll be too late; I'll be all sweatied up and tseshoybert."

Leo called in: "And when was the last time Reba washed the dishes?"

"I beg your pardon. We're going to Anne's the minute we're through eating. You and your ideas. Ben takes Mother to the movies, *I* wash the dishes —and you? Your plans come first, I see."

"Shah, shah already," said Sonia. "*Until* now I did? I can still do. Eat; go. An invalid yet I'm not."

"He's so concerned. Only Leo is such an angel he can tell everybody what to do."

The telephone rang.

"Who washes and irons your shirts?"

Leo went into the kitchen and picked up the receiver. The beer was still there. He gave his mother a look. She was clasping the bandage.

"The Matkoff residence."

Abe laughed.

Reba was still talking to Leo. "I'm not your slave. You've got one slave."

"Shah, er redt af 'em phone."

"Who was she with?" said Leo.

"You think he's not right?" said Ben, back at his seat. "You think you're married now you're not a daughter? You're graduated a cripple? Aza piste zach!"

"Why me? Do *I* live here? Did her hands get like that from washing *my* things? Of course Leo would never dream of sending his shirts to the laundry."

Leo took his hand off the mouthpiece, said, "Hold on a second," covered it again, and moved with the phone to the doorway. "You miserable skunk, will you kindly shut your hole? Lowlife, do you think anybody cares what you think?"

"My husband cares what I think. The world's not going to stop because you're on the phone. Some manners! You give yourself a middle initial and start saying *eyether*, and you're in the Four Hundred."

"You ungrateful wretch—I'll remember this."

"Listen to him! You might think he ever did something for me."

He went back to the sideboard and uncovered the mouthpiece. "Yes, she mentioned him now and then, but I never met him. He's the latest hot shot in the physics department."

Sonia took a can of cherries from the kitchen table and carried it to the sink. She went over to the window sill to look for her can-opener; it wasn't there.

Ben came back into the kitchen. "Groyser macher, af 'em phone day and night."

"Shah," said Becky.

"That's all she said?" Leo said into the phone.

Ben stood in front of the mirror over the sink and put out his tongue. "Puffed up with poisons! Through and through!" Keeping his eyes on the mirror, he scraped at his tongue with a teaspoon. "Only meat! Why you have a leg now I can see. Aza civilization! Poisons!"

"Nothing surprises me any more," Leo said into the phone. "Viva la circumstance! Well, thanks for letting me know. We're in the middle of s— of a delayed Thanksgiving dinner."

"Oh, hon, did you get that? He can't say *supper eyether*!"

LEO HUNG UP and stood there a few seconds, his back toward the others in the kitchen. Then he moved slowly into the dining room.

"I know it's none of my business who you were talking to, Leo, but you look like you just saw a ghost."

"They must have been talking about Elaine: she's the only ghost in his life—at the moment."

"You have a long memory of the favors you come to me for."

"Why shouldn't I? Do you ever let anybody forget? Let him do a favor for you, you sign your life away."

"I know better than to expect gratitude from you—but you might have a little decency."

"Decency! *He's* talking—how he treated Frances Levine, so she still hates him after three years. You're not such a hot shot since Elaine's father threw your engagement ring in your face. You can play Napoleon around here and get away with it, but not with me."

"I'll fix you, sister."

"I'm scared."

He went back to the kitchen. Sonia turned to him for a second, and he saw the can-opener in her hand.

"What? I'm getting plenty disgusted. Last week you cut yourself with that antique, it wasn't enough. Are you out of your mind? I'm throwing that hunk of junk out right now." He put the opener in his pants pocket. "You'll never see it again. There's the new opener right in front of your nose."

"So let it be *this* opener. I took out the old opener it's a tragic? A business!"

"Nor er vaist, der kliger," said Ben.

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Leo carried the three bottles of beer into the dining room.

"She's contributing half for the Frigidaire, is she? I'm still waiting to collect. She can complain Mom washes my shirts, can she? Ask her when she gave one dime for the house in the last ten years. Ten years ago she tore up a set of my lab reports because she had to take ten minutes to wash the dishes because Mom was in the store."

"Don't worry, you'll get your money for the Frigidaire—wait till you're married and have our expenses. Yes—you're very generous: he took Mom to *The Student Prince* ten years ago and can't forget it. He can't spend two cents on a paper without putting it down in his little book."

"Only *you* come to *me* for checks so you don't have to pay a dime at the bank."

"Keep your checks; I can get along without them, thank you."

"You can now see why I'll remain a bachelor. Wait till she opens up that mouth of hers on you. Better get out while you can—or is she fragrant already?"

"Honey, defend me."

"Come on, dear, you know better than to take Leo seriously. I can't say you wouldn't harm a fly—but you were the sweetest and most beautiful girl in the College of Education, and I love you."

"Just listen to that shit."

Leo had sat down and started to eat. Now he got up and went back to the kitchen for the bottle-opener.

Becky had been watching Sonia apply the new can-opener two or three ways that didn't penetrate.

"Let me," said Becky.

The opener slipped out of Sonia's hand and knocked a glass off the drainboard. Sonia tried to catch it, but it fell and broke as Leo came in.

"That's you all over. You're a pip! Do you *ever* know what you're doing? Isn't this how you do everything? She has the mechanical aptitude of a cockroach. Look—for the nth time. . . ." They heard the snap and watched the lid come off. "It's a big mystery, isn't it? That's what's too much to ask her to learn. She'd rather cut herself. A human being learns from experience—but my mother?"

Sonia had opened the cellar door to get the broom. She was sweeping the pieces of glass together. She bent over to move some sheets of newspaper to get the last slivers.

LEO SPIT in the sink. "Rubber. You sure know how to pick a duck, Mrs. M—like Pop knows what he's buying in the auction. You're not a cook—you're a taxidermist!"

Sonia was sweeping the glass onto a card she had taken from the window sill.

"Do you want me to translate that for you? A taxidermist stuffs a dead bird with sawdust so you can hang it on the wall. You'll know as much how to cook when you're a hundred and four as you knew the day you were born."

"Isn't he awful? My brother!"

"A nice, quiet, cheery household here."

Sonia's jaw was shaking. She dumped the glass into a brown paper bag and set it by the chair next to the door to the yard. She straightened up but didn't turn around.

"Ah! She's insulted! That's good. You were born an animal and you raised animals. . . . Well—the beer ought to be hot enough by now."

She turned around. "Drink it slow—it's cold like ice."

"Children!" said Becky, coming back to the dining room. "American children. It pays. Wait," she said to Reba, "you'll find out what a mother is."

"Don't worry. I won't be a slave like my mother; I know how to enjoy my life."

Sonia was wiping her eyes. Alvay! she thought. You should only enjoy till a hundred years. But first a man he can make a living let's see it?

"Am I an orphan?" said Reba. "Give me a sip, honey."

"Educated!" said Ben, back at his seat again. "You can show something for it, educated? Dummies! It's more sense in a dog! Something a plain farmer knows, respect for a human being, it's too much parents should expect from you?"

"Another brainstorm out of Minkevitz," said Leo.

"Huh! The Lord arrives, his mouth open. It's *your* concern your mother has a leg? You'll pardon my opinion—*you* know—but to me I see from this house nothing but a stable. It's not animals you're here? Pigs! Apes! Wild Indians!"

"Ben, answer a confidential question: what would you do with a brain if you had one? Eh? It's not your fault—does any Diamond have a brain? Maybe Mike: his income *tax* for last year was bigger than your income and mine put together."

"From *my* income you know something? From Mike's you know the same. They like to look big. She ever called up once Essie, she should say, 'Becky, come to us, spend the day'? Let him have diabetes on the bluehole! Ich kock af 'em Tatn zaynem!"

"Do you see *him* breaking his back sixteen hours a day? And his money's not sitting in Merlin Street at two and a half per cent. But you can have the consolation there's one man dumber than you—SM: *you're* not paying taxes on a lot in Swamptown."

"And the Building and Loan," called Sonia from the kitchen, "they paid ten cents on a dollar? Oy did we lost!"

"Nor yenem's hoyke zait er," said Sam.

"I didn't say *I* was smart. How could I be smart if you're my father? Now if it was the milkman I'd have a chance. But Ben thinks *he's* smart. He's scraped himself a baby pile and he sits on it.

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If you sat on the toilet, you'd do yourself more good. You should take a look at Mike's house in Palm Beach. You don't have to *be* Mike—but at least he knows what money's for. Do us a favor, Ben—after all your experience—enlighten us: what's the purpose of your existence?'

"Hear hear," said Abe.

"Aza jealous shvuntz—you're my age and you made what I made, then you can say something: a success in my first business nobody could touch me, in every block you can see a clock mine; and now everybody has a clock, I put them in neon signs. I don't have a distillery? Let's see *you* start in a new business from the bottom you're forty—let's see you even go in for yourself a first time; it wasn't a government to take care of you, you and Abe too, you wouldn't have a pair of shoes the both of you."

"Ben," said Becky.

"*You* know what life is? College graduates! A painted face; in front, a pair tsitskes geshvullene —in back, a tooches zi ken shuckeln; every hole hers drowned in perfume it can't come near her a skunk: that's what you learn it's important in America? A honey a dear, knip! smutsk! *he said* and *she said.*

"The purpose from my life! Hair a mien kligsheft! Iftieher groyser—thirty-five-dollar-a-week college cocker! A man should kill himself for a dollar morning to night—it's *my* philosophy of life? Or it's capitalism makes me? I was twelve years old somebody cared in the United States I lived I died? One cent somebody gave me? It's everywhere gimme gimme gimme, it's fake it's swindle, one kills the next. For every swindle the next one tries he should put it on me, I can give him back ten—a hundred—he'll be sorry he started up! *I* should be an angel, *I* should suffer? Not me, Yankel. But *I* made it it should be like that? The system stinks to the sky, the whole United States is full of shit."

"In Russia is good?" said Sam. "Answer me that! In Russia, bonds you would have? Your house you would have? And your machine?"

He had pulled out the piano stool from behind Leo and was sitting on it against the edge of the open door to the store. He had opened it so he could see if anybody stopped at the front step to look in the windows.

"Yold. It's important a machine—or a man? In Russia it's the whole civilization is a new thing. In Russia now he couldn't get in medical school Norman? In Russia I would sell clocks? There a Jew can somebody be. It's a bargain the United States?"

"I KNOW everybody says that about medical school, but all through high school and college—and now—I can't say anybody ever discriminated against me."

"That's because of your great charm—or you're blind; I'll let *you* decide which. My own pleasant experiences at Wallow I won't mention, but the whole school can blow up before they'll get a cent out of me. Half the students are Jews—and not one teacher in a hundred. In four years I didn't have one, and neither did you, and we weren't in the same College. *Now* there's one Jew in the English department—because Wallow specified him in his will. Didn't Clark tell your class there were too many Jews going into teaching?"

"You're distorting. She meant that here we took tests, it was civil service, but how many openings were there?—I got the only one that year—and if anybody thought he might get a job out of town, the suburban school boards weren't hiring Jews: she was just being realistic."

"Didn't she tell Robert the Red to get out of Education?"

"On account of his accent."

"He got an appointment, didn't he?"

"She wasn't wrong: his oral kept him in the state stores two years—he would have been first on the list."

"But the Board's OK!"

"I wouldn't call that anti-Semitic—he's teaching English, not Jewish."

"Are they running a public school system or a finishing school for Miss Worthington Kish-mir-in-tooches? Or maybe they're training Bell Telephone operators?"

"Her teacher Mr. Stotesbury Reba's what she worked for him"—Sonia was bringing in the cherries, two dishes at a time—"she didn't come to me for an advice, a bachelor he was old enough he could be her father he wanted she should go out with him?"

"Sonia! Don't be a fool! You think it's not anti-Semites in the United States? A Jew for President *you'll* never see it."

"Dummy!" said Sam. "In the United States it's pogroms?"

"Not yet," said Leo.

"In Russia Ben might have been another Trotsky," said Abe.

"Who needs to be Trotsky? A plain life of nature, on the farm—an air a man can breathe, no smoke, filth, consumption. Down from the tree with our own hands we take our fruit, and the vegetables what we planted in the ground we eat —no meats, no poisons from cans. No hate—no gimme gimme, every pig his nose in the garbage. There a farmer don't lose everything he sweated his life away."

"You saw it?" said Sam. "How many kulaks Stalin killed, you counted them? Your mouth you don't can open you're afraid you was be a slave in Siberia you like it?"

"Sam, what are you talking for? Do you know anything? Talk sense, I'll listen as good as the next one. When you know from your ass, don't talk."

"*You* know something? In Russia you can

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starve for a piece bread you know it? In the United States, even it's a depression, you can starve, hah?"

"Don't be a child. When everybody works—you know so much! unemployment is in Russia, big philosopher? go ahead, you tell me!—when everybody works, and from that everybody takes out what he needs, how can you starve? Nobody has too much, nobody don't have enough!"

"With the mouth is cheap," said Becky. "*What's yours is mine, and what's mine is mine.*"

"I'm on Pop's side," said Abe. "I'm a capitalist and I'm proud of it."

"Two A-1 kaptsn—excuse me, capitalists: between the both of them they have five dollars in the bank I see it I'll believe it."

"Not one carrot you didn't take in the mouth yet," Sonia said to Leo. "And I cooked them special for you."

"If you listen to him, he's the world's number one humanitarian. I'll fix his wagon. Tell me, Ben, in the last ten years have you once given one cent to charity?"

"As much as you—your mother washes your clothes, a sour, farshtinkene bachelor you still live at home—as much as you gave I gave!"

"I should live so long, nobody gives like Leo—every year he sends in the Federation plenty."

"He gives, he sends in? Good for him—a poorets! He has something to give? Maybe in his position he has to keep a front. And who pushes the check in his own pocket, you know? Sonia! Have a *little* sense? With all my might I work I'm ready I can drop—*I* should buy him his Buick the crook he sends in a sob story from some orphans' home? You *know* him? You'll ever *see* him? Fershvinden the gelt! There's your wonderful charity! When I give—don't worry! Listen—some sense you can hear yet?—so hear. It's not the first time I'm thinking it all over. I'll go—one day, soon, I'll go in the poor house: in this room, in that, I'll make a peep—here's an old man, hardly he lifts his glass tea, he'll tell me from his life story—I don't give him pennies, I push him five dollars in pocket; I go further yet, I see an orphan, a boy a beautiful head golden curls, a cripple, I'll put my hand on his shoulder, I'll walk with him in the garden, he'll explain me the flowers, slow I'll go he can keep up—I'll give *him* five dollars! That now I call charity. There can I something accomplish! No middle-man, no crooks, no Buicks! In prisons too I'll go!"

"I GIVE too, I give plenty," called Sonia. She came to the doorway; she had been cutting the sponge cake on the kitchen table. "A blind man comes in the store, ask he ever goes away I don't give him something?"

"What? Where do you come in? Once in six months der farkockte Iyd creeps in with his screwdriver he takes down your pishka he finds five-six pennies. Let him screw, better, slot machines in the subway, he wants money he can help orphans."

"Of all the phonies!" said Leo. "You have an orphan in your own family—you've done a lot in your life for Rosie and Sol."

"I should have a dollar every time I tell Becky—ask her—as soon Sol finishes high school I take him in the business."

"Meanwhile it's all right if he lives in ten different foster homes."

"*I* should take them in? Who can live with Rosie—a wild animal a moron she can't make a home for her one son. She didn't have a fight with Sonia she wanted to tear her hair out, he had to run down from the third floor Foley he should pull them apart? Let your mother say if it's not the truth. *My* family! It's not *her* family too?"

"Zi zorgt zich fer mir?" Sonia was carrying in the sliced sponge cake.

"Nobody's telling you to take them both in. Rosie can stay on relief and peddle shoelaces."

"He's a good kid," said Abe. "I taught him how to fish. Those summers he was at Cedar I never knew he was a Diamond."

"She don't have enough problems Becky? What she went through with Flora she's alive it's a wonder."

"Let's see how many kids *he* gets," said Reba. "People in glass houses . . ."

"Leo? He'll stink a bachelor his whole life. Af yenem's hinten 'siz git tse shmeisen. How many bucks *you* give to Rosie let's hear."

"She *your* sister. When my sister comes to me for money, that'll be my problem."

"That's one problem you'll never have," said Reba.

"I'm as good as the next one," said Ben. "You're worse than me."

"Talk out of both sides of your mouth, rationalize! Human beings who live in the world hold a responsibility to their fellow men—but you need to think everybody else is like you. That's how you like to live? Good. It's *your* life."

"Charity begins at home," said Becky. "My conscience are clear."

"You said something," said Ben. "Here his mother on a sick leg she stands in front of his nose, and er zorgt zich for Sol Rosie's. It costs him something, his big heart? When *I* say I'll do something, it's done. We'll see who it's here the selfish one. *You* can sit here. *You* can watch on your mother the gangrene it soon crawls on her hips. You should see her black in the coffin you can't wait? Murderers—it already looks you in the eyes! That's a Minkevitz brother does it? *I* can stand here to see it? Twenty dollars, a hundred dollars, for Sonia this minute I'm calling up a specialist!"

"We're waiting!"

"Who's there on Sunday?" said Becky.

"Sonia, tomorrow I call the American Hos-

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pital, we make an appointment with the top specialist, I'll take you myself."

"He'll give me a new leg?"

"The operations they make now, your leg it'll be like new."

"When it grows hair on my palm I'll see it."

"Ben, for you I have just one word—just two little words of advice: as they say in France—*know thyself*, brother. . . . By the way, Mrs. M, did you light the water?"

"Oy, 'chu' goor fergesen."

"As usual. Sol, run down to the cellar and light the water."

"Don't listen to *me*," said Ben.

"We're leaving, Mom," said Reba.

"Leaving? What leaving? You can't taste a piece cake? I just baked it today."

"Wrap me up some to take home."

"Me?" said Ben. "Oh no! But I can see it in your mother's nose: like it's Sunday today over the whole world, in six months she has a stump I give you my word!"

"Bite your tongue," said Becky.

"It's not Sunday . . ." said Sol, going toward the cellar door with a safety match.

The kitchen clock began to strike eight.

"Hear?" said Ben. "You hear? The clock strikes for the truth!"

"Kee-rist!" said Leo, "will you look at the time!" He dropped his fork, swallowed the bottom of his glass of beer, jumped up, pulled up his pants, and buckled his belt.

"Tea I'm bringing in, where are you running, sit down."

SAM STOOD up. Sonia grabbed him and Leo and pulled at them in opposite directions. "Where are you sitting?" she said to Sam, and "Where are you running?" she said to Leo. "Go away, slop, you can't see he's not done? You're not done yet, sit down, here it's your tea."

"Should I say it in Jebip? Your duck was pastafazoo—nobody else in the world can make a duck like you—but I'm fini. Is there a secret reason you didn't make chicken? A naye mishugahs! For ten years I've been working on her to break the habit of cooking chicken seven days a week—now it's only Sunday, Monday, and Thursday. A housewife for thirty years, and how many meals can she make? OK, Pop, you can sit down now."

He padded up the stairs.

"So what I should make? Vus likest di yuh?"

"Sonia," said Becky, "where are you running? Sit down already. Rest your leg."

Sonia called up the stairs: "So what I should make, tell me? An advice you can give? Suggest! Suggest!"

They heard Leo's belches and then his slippers on the bare steps to the third floor.

Sonia wiped her neck with her apron. "The restaurants he likes—who knows what kind drek they put in, se hut mahn bubba's tam!"

Sam had sat down.

"Grubber pimpusnik—you couldn't wait? You had to run in in the middle, he eats like a bird, you couldn't let him findish? You threw away his appetite. Horse, you're worried you won't eat? Don't worry! You'll eat more than anybody put together!"

"Once a mule, always a mule," said Ben. "Sonia, I tell you, in hell you can't find aza bunch cheapies."

"In hell now I'm elected? I work my way up in America? Pig," she said to Sam, "to wash your hands first me darf dir zugen? Go to the sink!"

She followed him and took the open can of cherries off the sink. "Soap in the cherries I need yet."

She looked into the teapot and carried it into the dining room. Then she came back for glasses.

"Mule! The dishtowel it's all you can find?" She jerked it away from him. "Every other towel it's already disappeared?"

She brought four glasses to the dining-room table.

"It's *his* leg? *Him* it hurts I cook on a black leg? As long it stands the auction, shmattes he can carry home in the last war they threw them away, he's satisfied. It's room yet under the counter he can push in more boxes, which nobody'll ever open them again biz Meshiech vit kimmen, ba im iz frailich—a customer wants something it takes a year to find it."

Sam came in carrying a plate of soup, and she went back to the kitchen. Ben blew and sipped at his tea and sighed. He kept his spoon in the glass, holding it with an index finger, his thumb under the glass.

"Your husband! Another diplomat, twice a year with one foot in the bath. Your wife's leg it don't concern you? She should have a servant it don't convince you? Look how he eats. When he pours on the pepper, you can faint. Ask him *what* he eats? Chaym Shmendrik—*you'll* make an end too. Already in your nose I can see the acids. You can yet in front of him sit a plate meat and potaytes (never mind you're falling from your feet)—he don't ask no questions. You're a horse, you're dirt—by him is the same. Ask Becky I let her move an inch: three days a week, nine to seven—the cleaning, the washing, the ironing—"

"Enough I don't give her every week? What she's saving for, ask her?"

"I save? Once in three years I buy a pair shoes I should have to come to him? Here, fress."

Sonia plopped down his plate.

"You took in a girl before already the whole day," said Ben. "Don't tell me."

"*Don't tell me don't tell me!* How she did the panya, you saw? In the hall behind the banister you saw? Take more soap here, there under the radiator it's still some water wipe up. With the mop they make clean! A sprinkle, a shake—done! Every second I should watch her? I can do it my-

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self already. They want to work? To play all day the radio—this they know, se grilltzt in kup; no radio it don't suit them. I got to pay them yet? *I* get two dollars a day? And how many pair stockings from the store? And slips?"

"And the rings I lost?" said Becky.

"Hon," said Reba, "Anne will hate us if we're late. I'm going upstairs for a minute; be ready to leave as soon as I come down."

"Aie!" said Ben. "Beautiful children! They took a knife to you they could make it quicker. And who's to blame? Who raised them? If not you, who?"

"*If not you who!* I'm a stone?"

"Not better a stone, you should be a garbage can?"

"It pays you should kill yourself?" said Becky. "I give the girls credit today they're not in such a hurry to have babies. Reba's not rushing in."

Alevay! Sonia pulled in her upper lip with three teeth and stared at her apron. What else? It's the Yankee gets the credit. Reba can show she'll do what I did, I'll be glad to see it. Run to the department store every Monday and Thursday—yuh. Aza mitzve! Bolt af 'em dieer, az me hut nit k'in shtik flaish—dus, yuh. And when it comes a baby, bolt darf min es araynvarfen in incubator—if it's alive even. The night before I had you I washed out a tub clothes. Who heard from needles, vitamins, overweight goor? How many steps I climbed I was pregnant with you, we lived on the third floor and even winter in bitter cold I took out Leo—even it was only a half-hour—he shouldn't be so pale, he should have an appetite? And with you in the beginning—Leo was just two, I could leave him in the street even a second?—*you* could sit down with the baby in the top step like me and take on the other arm Leo and slide down one step at a time the two flights I want to see it. Diaper service we had? Washing machines? With a stranger anybody left a baby he could go to the movies? Or three o'clock at night on my knees I fell asleep scrubbing the kitchen? All cakes and no shit—dus vilt the Yankee.

"Mom! Are you deaf?"

Sonia jumped up.

"Do I have to stand on my head to get some hot water around here? Where's that goddamn kid? Can't he even light a boiler? And tell him to bring up a towel; not next year—now. And where are my shirts? Didn't I tell you to get them yesterday? What did you do with them?"

"I got them, you'll find them, don't worry. Stop hollering, you'll make yourself hoarse."

She took a towel out of the bottom of the china closet and started for the stairs.

"Sonia," said Becky, "where are you going? Sol will take it—he don't want to be bad to his mother."

"It's all right," said Sonia. "Read, baby, read."

"The baby," said Ben, "the genius, also a cripple. He's not old enough he should have some sense? His mother she can hardly drag herself around, vus vaist er? She still stuffs him in his mouth while he reads."

Sonia flicked her husband in the shoulder with the back of her hand. "Farkockte Iyd, farshtinkene. Fresst? Go take a match and see if it burned out the fire in the cellar. Leo has to shave, and you sit."

She stepped up on the landing.

Sam put down the wing he had been gnawing and got up wiping his mouth with the back of his hand. Behind Sol's chair, he reached over and walloped the book off the table.

"*You* ate? Take up Leo the towel."

Sol picked up the book. "You broke the back."

"What you eat you know, always with the head in a book?"

They heard Leo again. "Are you really out of your mind? Go right down this second and send Sol up with the towel or tell him I'll break his head. And for the sixty-seventh time, where are the shirts?"

Sol went to the stairs, the book in his hand. He stopped on the landing and waited for Sonia to get down.

"He hollers—he don't mean it. You only have one brother, kind."

As Sol went up, Reba came down.

"Gee it's cold up there. It's as cold as outside. Leave it to my father! It was better when we had coal."

They heard Leo again. "You can forget anything I ever did for you—you don't owe me any favors; do anything to yourself you want—don't talk to anybody, knock your head against a wall; but when I ask you to do something for Mom, you might at least have the decency to think of somebody else for a change. Do you ever stop dreaming? Do you have *any* feelings?"

"Wouldn't you know," said Reba. "The thermostat's set for sixty-eight."

"Let me maybe give a move the macherayka, arayn loyft er in der minit."

Sam stepped into the room as Reba re-set the thermostat.

"What are you monkeying?" He moved the pointer back.

"It's freezing upstairs, Pop. Turn on some heat."

"What? Who says it's cold? Touch me." He held out his hand.

"Smart guy! Long woolen underwear and two sweaters he's wearing: *touch me*! *My* hands can be falling off—Maigst dich shaimen."

"Aza cheapie. Sonia, you got a toothpick?"

"On the closet in kitchen it's a box."

THE PHONE rang once. Sonia went to the stairs. "Sollie, holler up one ring." To Reba she said, "Button up your coat. You can't sit home one night? Out, out—only out?"

"Thank you very much for the supper, Mom,"

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said Abe. "Don't listen to what Leo says. If my mother could cook like you, I'd be single too."

"It's a new hat? Every Monday and Thursday by you it's a new hat."

Leo came in in his shorts.

"Look how he goes—a nakete. It's July?" Sonia ran into the kitchen.

"My darling sister—do me a favor and stay mad. It's so kind of you to give your mother a break and let her feed you once a week."

Sonia came back with a towel and reached up to wrap it around Leo's shoulders. "When she's so busy— Bridge comes before a mother."

Leo went into the kitchen. The towel fell on the floor.

"Maybe I'll see you Wednesday, Mother—don't expect me. Good bye, Becky. Good bye, Ben."

"Good bye," said Becky. "Have a nice time."

Abe opened the door and followed Reba out into the store. Sonia was going after them, carrying the towel, when she heard Leo.

"Goddamn it! Do you know it's 110 in here?"

He jammed down the top sash next to the stove; the chains jumped and quivered.

"What are you doing?"

"Lunatic! Are you insane? I'll end up in a lunatic asylum yet. Do you mind if I don't suffocate? Did you ever hear of such a thing?"

"What did I do? Un di gaist a nakete! A finstere choolem af mahne sunim! You want to get sick? Close the window, please, kind! Just see how the wind blows—all over the papers are flying. . . ."

He pulled her away from the window.

"I don't know whether to laugh or shoot myself. Is there another house like yours anywhere in the civilized world? Are you a human being? Will you do me a favor and tell me what good it is to scrub a floor if you're going to bury it under filthy papers? Between the papers on the floor and the paper on the wall, this is without a doubt the filthiest kitchen this side of Japan. Is it any wonder I can't bring anybody in this house?"

He began to dial. Sonia turned from the window, brought the teapot back to the kitchen, filled a glass on the table, and began pouring the tea from one glass to another. He has to holler. Elaine it's still on his mind. In and out a hundred times a day Sam tracks in dirt: instead every day Rina should wash the floor, papers I put down —the thick-covered pages, no white spaces should show the dirt. What does Leo know? For the floor a dollar a week he wants to pay?

"Pick me up at nine," said Leo into the phone. "I'll be outside."

When he turned, Sonia said, "Here's your glass tea I made you—it's not hot; drink."

"Take it away before I spill it in your face. *Your* mouth is leather, but *I* can be scalded. Did you decide yet where you hid the shirts?"

"Where I hid them? You don't have? They're not in the bureau?"

"Am I sorry I moved home!"

He opened the sideboard drawer that worked. He looked in both sides of the closet underneath.

"You think I have all night to look? If this happened once there might be some excuse. You never remembered a fact in your whole life."

"I got too much on my mind."

"Aw, poor girl! You have a limited brain, that's all. What would you do if you had to make a living in the outside world? You couldn't hold a job for three days. You're lucky you got hold of Pop. You think he's worse than you are? You're as bad as he is. Yeah, I know—jobs you had: four dollars a week."

"Twelve dollars. In that time—"

"I wouldn't have a suit tonight if I didn't remind you six times Friday to go to the tailor. Make me sick."

"Now I remember! They're on the bureau the shirts in my room I left them. See! You had to get excited? A person can make a mistake. . . . Now it's cold already—drink."

She held up a glass half full.

"You know what you can do with it."

He padded upstairs.

SONIA PUT down the glass and tried to shut the window, but the sash was stuck. "Stinkbarrel," she called to Sam, "close the window." She bent over to straighten some papers. When Sam came in, she said, "And with your greasy luhpes don't touch the curtains which I wash and iron them when you're snoring."

"Sonia, come in and sit down," said Becky. "It's not time you should eat?"

Sonia went into the dining room.

"Wherever it comes an evil into the world, first it tries out on me. On one side, a son-in-law an ulcer and an emic. Here, it's a man a stomach like a horse, which he only cares the auctioneer should be a millionaire. Fer vus befailt mich? Chicken it's not good enough any more? Rubber it's the duck? Ich bin nisht k'in expert cook? In restaurant Reba ken gaien, she can pay three dollars a meal me ken nisht nehmen tse mul. The old can opener it's not good enough? So a new mother get too! Kill me—and take an airplane! . . . I made out until now? Two hands I still have? Another mother she wants to depend her kids should take her in?—she can depend. Me? Go slow, uncle! My kids I don't need yet, thank God! To the poorhouse I won't go!"

"To crazy house you'll go?"

Kliger Iyd! Abi me darf im nit iz er bolt du. She should have an end like the Frankel—*that* came to her yet? So dumb to pregnant every year she wasn't. (And not so dumb to wash out her insides with vinegar, which she was sure even Becky did it.) Nine kids she had alive the Frankel, and how many dead? It was any wonder, on the slice machine she sliced herself off a finger, to her husband she took the cleaver? He was just in

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time or he would have been by a head shorter and to him the thought would never come what good luck God sent him he was laying in a ward only an arm bone smashed in a hundred splinters. God watches—what else? Four weeks past Warsaw it happened! Not three-four weeks the lucky one was back in the store they let his wife out az och un vai! Everybody who went into them said she was all right; but it passed three-four days and when the house was asleep, in her nightgown shtillinkerhait she crept downstairs, and in the kitchen she boiled a bucket oil. Shah-shtill she went back up, ripped off his covers and took care of him good from head to foot—it wasn't enough, the bottom from the bucket she saved for the two babies. Right there in the bed they all three would have made an end, but next door the blacksmith the oldest girl heard screaming, and he was the one saw Mrs. Frankel in her nightgown throw herself under the truck.

Leo came in and went into the kitchen. Sonia followed.

BEN RAISED his eyes, lifted the tip of his nose with thumb and forefinger, and whistled—his standard comment on affectation. "You're going to suffocate her?"

Becky flushed. "A real sheik."

Leo got his coat off the cellar door hanger, and Sonia held it for him. He looked at the clock and he looked in the mirror. He drank some of the half-glass of tea waiting on the side of the sink. He yawned.

"See—you yawn. It shows it's empty in your stomach. Honest to God! I know—I know by experience that that is."

The doorbell rang and he went out.

"Now I can eat—my heart gnaws at me already."

Sonia filled the roaster with hot water and set it on the stove. Then she filled a plate and carried it to the table.

"It melts in the mouth. He knows what good is? He's crazy my son. He makes a mountain from a moth hole. He screams on me you think he means it? He's nervous. What it's on his heart, he lets it out on me. He'll be somebody Leo—you'll see it. For Mike he was too honest. A gold watch from the whole office they gave him he graduated."

"Gahntser knocker, it stinks from his mouth. What he tells you you know."

"He knows what he's doing—you can listen to me."

The pulp she had torn out of a slice of rye bread fell on the rug, and she bent over to pick it up. She straightened and bit off a piece.

"He left once home his glasses, the teacher sent him home—how old was he? maybe ten—I went back with him, the teacher said, 'I only wanted he should learn a lesson people can depend on him. He needs his glasses? With his eyes shut can Leo do his homework.' Don't worry about Leo. Show me it's another American boy he dahvined to twenty-one. Leo never came to me for one penny. Only he hollers."

"Just like Norman! He says, 'Don't be a miser all your life, Dad. I need five bucks.' Bucks! That's what he knows—to pull from his father bucks."

"He was thirteen Leo already newspapers gave out, in ball games peanuts he sold."

She bit deep into half a peeled cucumber.

"And maybe a college boy needs something, if he comes to his father for a dollar it's a crime? If we didn't have it, that's another thing. Maybe you want he should dig ditches? He has beautiful hands Norman. So in six months I didn't hear him once lift a finger to the piano; but he finishes dental school his hands will be his fortune."

"Let me live to see it! Let him bring in more than me! The office I make him I don't ask him he should pay me back one penny. For my bucks I won't have to come to him. He won't take a good piss on my grave."

"Toilet, close your mouth better. Listen to that mouth his. You can't talk nicer? 'Vulgarian!' That's what Norman tells him—Norman gives it to him good. You didn't have a mother, Sonia, it's no excuse Ben shouldn't know better. When we got married, if I let him all day Sunday he laid in bed and naked strolled around the apartment."

"She knows! The body from a man is nature—a wonder—a light in the eyes!"

Becky flushed. "From a man yet! From a woman even it's not to look at. The top, when you're a young girl, is not bad. But the bottom—what's so beautiful to see? Feh! Sit, Sonia, sit—I'll bring you in your glass tea."

Ben looked at the floor.

From the kitchen Becky said: "What does a man know? Edythe's got her hooks in him Norman, he don't know if he's coming or going. A man. He can't blow his nose yet. The pisherka. She cooked him a meal tonight? Oh would I love to see it! She can make tea she's a cook."

"Leo's not in such a hurry to get married. For what? How many girls he had already you can't count them. He knows where he has it good. He's going to find another one like me?—he'll keep looking!"

"Nature gives us a body we should take care of it; every corner in Nature is a miracle, a treasure. . . . Maybe a doctor Norman will be yet. To heal people—any other profession compares? A weak heart, cancer, gall stones—we need them? In Russia now they can take eyes from dead people, and make the blind they should see. Every goddamn lousy disease science will make an end to. And in the end—old age! A man should have to die, like an animal? The appendix, Nature made a mistake?—old age, too."

"Af yener velt."

"I'm forty-one years young—not old: what I can do now I couldn't do it when I was twenty."

Becky brought in the glass of tea.

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"You hear how he's dreaming?" said Sonia.

Becky sat down.

"*He* should live forever—only Flora they had to take away. For what? She brought in once a little pussy cat, I didn't see, in the bathtub she drowned her. She laughed, Florelle. So—a baby has no sense; but God—how He took away Flora it's any different? Who gave her a weak heart? Me. And who gave me? A little girl shouldn't take out her sled? She came in on fire, she wouldn't let me feel her. Only a wurst sandwich she wanted—with mustard on both sides, and chocolate milk. And with a hundred and four degrees heat! What did she know? A bird! In the hospital she was still playing. 'It's so funny, Mommy,' she said, 'the doctors are so funny: Bab*cock* and Lip*schitz.*' "

Becky coughed. She said, hoarsely, "She used to say, 'Mommy, you're young and fool-i-sh yet.' "

She couldn't stop coughing.

"Sam, bring in a glass water."

The water didn't help. Becky's eyes bulged. Blood filled her white neck and face.

"I'll bring in the digitalis."

Ben went out the back door. After Flora had died, Becky had shut herself up, and Sonia had recommended the house next door so Becky could have company. The house went for $6,000, and remodeling cost $3,000. The private entrance and the third-floor bathroom and kitchen would soon pay for themselves, and then the rent would pay the taxes and more yet; and in a few years he would sell the house at a profit, after living in it free.

He came back with the box of pills, panting.

Becky was pale.

"Give her, give her," said Sonia. She had another glass of water ready on the table.

Becky swallowed a pill. She put down the glass and looked at her lap.

"Go to bed better. Ben will bring you up a glass tea."

"And the dishes? I wanted to help. . . ."

"A new fashion! *You wash and I watch*! Go, go!"

"It was a beautiful dinner."

"In how many years I never tasted peas they should be so sweet. . . . So next year, we're all . . . you'll invite me."

"I'm such a coward. . . ."

Sam pushed back his chair. "I have to go to toilet."

"Hust shoyn es loyfenish, in draird eran?"

SONIA WENT down to the cellar to relight the boiler; Sam had turned it off. She went upstairs to make the beds and get the wash together. After the first week she would turn her own sheet and Sam's over, and every other week she changed them; Sol's and Leo's beds she changed every week, and Sol and Leo got a second sheet. This was the week when all four beds were changed. She started on the third floor. When she finished here, she wrapped a sheet around the other pieces, tied it, and rolled the bundle down to the second-floor landing.

She did her own room last. Reba had moved out in June, and Sonia had left the double bed in the second-floor front room and had taken the middle room. She was forty-nine and Sam was sixty. The open doorway between the two rooms was blocked by the dresser from their first bedroom set. The two top drawers, lined with old newspaper, were still filled with Reba's relics. Making the bed, Sonia had to be careful when she moved it—one of the casters was loose and if it fell out she would have to ask Sam to stick it back. It was an old iron bed. Against the wall facing her pillow was a glass-doored bookcase with three rows of five shelves each. It was filled with sets Leo had bought at auction. The wall over the bookcase was bare except for an inch of old, unpapered gas pipe. Later, framed full-page color photographs of the faces of Thomas Mann and Einstein would hang there, cut out of *Life*—Leo was a charter subscriber and saved every issue for fifteen years.

From the landing Sonia shoved the two bundles over the banister. In the kitchen she sorted and counted the pieces aloud before she pushed them deep into the laundry bag—every other Monday she sent out a hundred-piece damp wash. She didn't need to write down the numbers.

She couldn't work the rope: her hands were chapped, some of the finger tips were split. It was awkward and painful for her to squeeze a lemon or tie her shoelaces. After Edythe first shook Sonia's hand, she told Sol it felt like a tree. Five years from now, in 1942, when Sonia was at City Hall to apply for citizenship, the clerk stopped trying to take her fingerprints—he said, "What have you done to your hands, Mom?" She said, "I sit on the rocking-chair too much."

Sol was reading in Leo's chair, leaning back against the wall with his feet up on the sideboard. A slat nailed to the floor kept the chair from slipping. He got up and bounced the heavy bag for her, tightening the noose in the neck, and tied the rope. Sol's hands were soft and smooth except for one callous—his "pencil bump," on the first joint of the right middle finger.

In the dining room Sonia cleaned off the dishes and stacked them. Holding a stack with two hands, when she lifted herself up into the kitchen she had to lean against the woodwork—she couldn't take hold of it. The dishes filled the sink. There was no drip-rack on the drainboard; she stacked the washed dishes upside down, in a chain. To make room, she moved the glass holding used teabags to the window sill. After the silverware and pots, she cleaned out the stove-burners. She didn't have rubber gloves—she began using them after her eczema attack when Sol was drafted; and then she was never again permitted

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to use soap. The dried dishes and silverware went back to the dining room, to the top half of the china closet. (1942, too, was the last year for Pesach dishes, now kept apart on one side of the bottom half of the closet.) The glasses stayed on the drainboard; they would go into the kitchen closet, above the sideboard, later—Sonia would have to stand on a chair, and she didn't want to bother Sol now, a second time. One dish was still unwashed—the serving plate, with the garbage, on the kitchen table. There was no indoor garbage pail (it would stink up the kitchen), and most of the paper bags she brought home from shopping went into the store for re-use.

Now Sonia went over the dining-room rug with a hand sweeper. To sweep the kitchen, she had to shake out the newspapers. Half of them were crumpled and torn. She piled and folded them and set them behind the bag with the broken glass by the door. She swept the dirt together and dumped it off the card into the bag. Then she went through the discarded papers on the floor at the back of the door, picking out the classified pages.

When she had spread these on the floor, she was ready to take out the garbage and dirt, but she was sweating. She looked at Sol—he was still reading. She took her coat down from the cellar door and pulled it over her shoulders. To pull the door shut after her, she had to take her hand away from her collar. In the yard she found the garbage can lid on the ground, on top of the brick she used to hold the flattened lid down. (The brick had come from the pile the builder had left with Ben last year.) She saw a cat's eyes, halfway up the fence. She snarled at it and the cat climbed over to the alley. Sam did not bring home stray cats or dogs any more; after a cat had shit on Reba's first good coat—a velvet coat with a badger collar—as soon as Sonia saw a new cat or dog in the house she threw open the back door and came down with the broom on the animal's head. At least here she could take the wash off the line any time—on Water Street when Leo was born there had been rats in the yard at night. But she would throw bread crusts out for the sparrows in the yard, and when she saw sparrows bathing in a puddle she would say, "Klaine foyglich even have sense for theirs." She dumped the garbage off the plate, set the plate on the ground, dropped in the bag of broken glass and dirt, covered it with the folded sheets of newspaper, and set the lid and brick back on; she used one hand —the other held her coat together at the throat. She came back into the house shivering. She bolted the door and hung up the coat. She washed the serving plate, dried it and put it away, cleaned the sink with cleanser, and wiped her hands on her apron.

She set two chairs facing each other by the table. She sat down on one and with her hands lifted her right leg to the other. Sol didn't look up.

Did Leo say right—feelings for somebody Sol didn't have any? Any time he kissed her? said a kind word? Or a mean word, even? Only he listened. When they gave him the wristwatch last year a graduation present, he told anybody "Thanks"? To the third floor he could let her take the towel—why? He hurt her leg he didn't care? She did him something bad? What? When? She didn't still feed him even?—he was her baby. He didn't love her it couldn't be. On Mother's Day—when? it was already five years?—he didn't sneak out to the 5 and 10 to bring her home six glasses? And the other time, a Saturday night, she was busy in the store, how he surprised her: she came running in to wash the dishes—they were all done, dry, standing on the table, the sink shining like diamonds. So? And since then? Five years later it wasn't the same Sol?

READ, only read. When he wasn't reading? Always another book—never an end. He studied too hard; he would be better off he went out sometimes—here Leo was right. He was pale, he didn't eat. He needed this book? He couldn't write a book like this? Why not? Mark Twain made so much money then why Leo sold the whole set from Mark Twain's books to Rina for two dollars? They didn't have enough room? So many bookcases they had already, they needed another one? Not enough they had to bring in one through the third-floor window—to move it cost more than the bookcase. The last one Leo brought home from the auction they had to put it in the dining room. A house with books.

Out of the corner of his eye, Sol saw her head drooping over her folded arms. When it dropped too far, it jerked back, but she didn't open her eyes. Her head dropped sideways too, toward the table or the floor, but she didn't fall. As Sol watched he kept pressing down the cartilage in the tip of his nose. Once he sighed.

A heavy truck, passing by, shook the house.

Sonia started—her eyes opened. Sol was still reading. Before she thought, she interrupted him. "I was asleep?"

He looked up, wrinkling his forehead. "You were chrahckin'."

She wiped her neck.

He farted silently, flushing. Sam and Leo could fart openly before Sonia. While he waited, they heard Sam open the door from the store. He came into the kitchen.

"Skunk! Gai mir in draird! The second you walk in, you stink up the kitchen."

She spit.

Sol laughed. "It was me! See—" He fanned the air to her with his book, holding his place. "Pyoo!"

Sam reached over Sol's legs for the shaving-cup he kept his teeth in overnight.

"You need to go to toilet? *Now* go, before *he* stinks it up you can't catch your breath."

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Sol got up, his finger in the book. Sonia watched him go out. He had a loose stomach? It was the soda. Maybe he was stopped up—it wasn't too late, an enema she could still give him before she took her bath.

Sam lifted and bolted the heavy solid insert Foley had made for the square he had cut out of the door to give them another window. Sam raised the bottom sashes of the two windows and pulled in and bolted the shutters. He shut and latched the windows and went upstairs.

Sonia felt cold. She took a match off the window sill and lit one of the front burners on the stove. The thermostat was finished: every night Sam turned off the switch in the cellar. She was afraid to touch the switch.

THERE WAS a pencil on the window sill —she would surprise Sol. She slid an envelope from under the embroidered scarf on the sideboard and sat down at the table, turning her chair to have the back behind her. She began to write her name. She spoke each letter. After the first name she stopped to wipe her neck. The table wobbled when she picked up her arms. It was a round wooden table, from her first dining-room set; the legs were clawed C's with the backs attached, and there was some folded cardboard under one leg to cut down the wobble when you shifted your elbows. The oilcloth covering the table was crisscrossed with knife cuts. New cuts became a problem for Leo almost ten years later, after he brought in a formica-topped table with tubular chrome-plated legs—Sonia kept forgetting to use the breadboard he had bought her. Now, at the old table, she finished her last name, rested again, and then wrote the whole name a second time. Sol still wasn't back. She took part of the Sunday paper off the radiator.

When Sol came in she said, "You have a loose stomach?"

"No—one long bupka."

Sonia showed him the envelope. "It's good?"

"All right—but it's not straight."

"I got to write straight too? . . . I had more time, I could learn. I'll learn yet. Leo ever gets married, I'll have more time. . . . If I'll do it? It remains to be seen! Hah!" She blushed. "Let's see your father can say such a high word!"

She pointed to the newspaper. "A-n-d: this makes *and*, ain't it?"

"Right. And this?"

"*And this*? I can read it like I can dance. . . . He made something from this book the author?"

"He *lost* money on it."

"So—darfst mootshen zich?"

"Now he's famous."

"He's alive?"

"No."

She spit.

"What good's money?"

"What good it is? Just go in Nate's delicatessen and see what you can get you don't have money. *Af vus shtait de velt? Ze shtait af gelt.* Vus vaist di? You have scholarships. From the government it comes to you fifteen dollars a month. In Minkevitz it was nothing to eat in the house, to Pop's partner I had to go to beg a ruble for bread. I cried, I didn't want to go. Then somebody stole Brownie the cow, we didn't have milk.

"I didn't want to learn? Who let me? . . ." She wiped her neck. "Bin fitsh nuss, oogegusen mit shvais. . . . I didn't get scarlet fever I was fourteen, I'd know something. Wet to the bones I came back to Monya: I fell asleep—too far I went on the trolley, in the pouring rain I had to walk back, in the dark. From seven in the morning to six at night I stitched sleeves on men's shirts, I didn't have time to eat supper—I went right to night school. In the hospital I saw they took off my whole head hair it came down to the waist. Oy did I cry!

"*You* read and write good? *You* had a stepmother you were twelve years old, you wanted to leave home? They say the sun in winter, it warms like a stepmother. And here was good? I wanted to go back. I cried. It choked me tomatoes, I couldn't take a tomato in mouth. I had somebody here? With Monya I lived, we had the wedding supper in her house, the gas we used up cooking she charged me for it.

"Her delivery with Ben it killed my mother. So I was the mumma. Sense I had? I was nine, I didn't see he had his hand in the side, I closed the trunk. What did the doctor know? He was a doctor? Who knows what he was. So one finger is an inch shorter and crooked, too."

She wiped her neck.

"Pop married again I went to live with the bubba. She saw a picture from my wedding, but not from Leo—not even Martin. Pop's picture she liked—a businessman, zair fine! . . . She said everybody would one day fly—on the roof they would keep wings . . . From Denksgivning she didn't know. Crutzmich, yuh: not one lid from a pot you couldn't leave off—Yussele was flying, he had a full ladle shit he should poison the Iyden. When the poern couldn't hear, Easter, we said, 'So Christ has come out of the ground? You lie like a hound.'"

"What's a poer?"

"A poer? It's the Ukrainians—the goyim. . . ."

"What's the difference between a goy and a poer?"

"The difference? You say *poer*! You want to know the history of it? . . .

"So let me tell you. . . . Pesach maybe it fell a spoon on the ground (you think we had floors like here?), the bubba buried it it should be pure again. The cat's feet she tied up in little sacks, the cat shouldn't touch the Pesachdike dishes.

"Oh were we dumb!—Iyden with goyim together! Pishechts we drank for a fever. In the flour mill in Minkevitz they put in the elecktrich-

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estvo (let's hear your father can say that!), everybody came to push the button—they could feel it go through them—a miracle from Heaven!"

"You didn't come over until you were fourteen. You could have gone to school in Russia for eight years."

"You think it was like here? Where did it come a Jew he could go to school? One in a hundred. For a doctor, maybe he had money could a Jew go in der Shvayts."

"What's that?"

"Der Shvayts! You don't learn from der Shvayts? . . . Chaider I went, sometimes."

"What did your father do?"

"He was in the egg business. From the poern he bought eggs, he had a wagon, to Zinkev he went, to Staraya Ushitsa, as far Proskurov."

"Did you know your father's mother or father?"

"I was born the mother his still lived. But her I don't remember. The father, he died young. A shaigets threw him in the head a stone."

"Did you know the bubba's father or mother?"

"Go know! The bubba was already old. Fon Bubba Tultse's time he wants to know! You need it?"

"Her name was Tultse?"

She laughed. "Vus maint Bubba Tultse I should explain you? . . . It's from long ago—nobody it's alive ever saw it—so who knows from it? only they tell bubba mahnsas."

The clock whirred. It was five minutes to twelve.

"Look how late it is. Like a poorets I sit and talk."

She went down to the cellar to turn off the boiler. Then she went up to the second floor to turn on the hot water in the bathtub and light the gas heater. In her bedroom she collected fresh long drawers, an undershirt, a petticoat, and a flannel nightgown, and carried them to the bathroom. In the front room she picked up the bottle of rubbing alcohol on the marble top of the floor cabinet built in the alcove between the closets. The closets were shallow—the few suits and dresses there hung parallel with the wall. In the cabinet only one or two screws were left in the four door-hinges; the sagging doors, without handles or knobs, stayed shut in front of ten years' dust. Set back above the marble, a mirror six feet high covered the door of a wooden medicine chest—also unused and undusted, containing a few bottles and tins with faded labels.

Over the bureau against the front wall hung a brown photograph in a floral-carved oval gilt frame over two feet high, showing Sam, seated, with the moustache he had shaved off long ago (then only the curled, waxed ends in his wedding picture were off)—Sonia, three months pregnant with Sol, standing a little behind Sam, touching his shoulder—in front of her, Reba, in a coarse home-knitted sweater—at Sam's right, Leo, in a sailor suit.

Sonia changed the alcohol to her left hand and picked up the bench of her vanity dresser, which she never used and which still stood in Sam's room. In the bathroom she lifted the shade to see if any lights were on next door. The downstairs was dark, but Becky was reading a newspaper in bed. Sonia sighed. She turned off the water.

Downstairs again, in the kitchen, she pulled the radio plug out of the socket behind the refrigerator. It was a small radio, on top of the refrigerator. She plugged in the toaster. The toaster stood on the sideboard—the cord didn't reach the table.

She took a quart of milk, butter, and packaged white bread out of the refrigerator. There was no breadbox in the kitchen.

"Take out the cherry jelly too."

Sol called preserves *jelly*. Sonia did the food-shopping—every day; she bought everything in small quantity.

She poured some milk into an aluminum pot and set it on the lit burner. She put the bottle back and sat down.

Sol looked up. "I don't want no hoyt."

"Don't worry—I'm watching."

"If there's hoyt in it, *you'll* have to drink it."

"It won't be no hoyt. You want cold milk you'll run to toilet again."

"You want me to vomit?"

"You won't vomit. What you're so scared a little piece hoyt?"

She stood over the pot. Another one knew what good is. From hoyt you can vomit! And from a soft-boiled egg the white once let's see him eat it, he vomited from it he was a baby he could still vomit. Now raw, like Sam, an egg *she* couldn't eat. An appetite! He could clean up a plate anything—a true pig. Sol she had to pour in cod liver oil—and the steak she gave him, he was little, just to chew up for the blood and spit it out?

She left the burner on and poured the milk into a glass at the stove, holding back the rim of skin with a spoon. She carried the glass to the table, and Sol studied the surface of the milk.

She made a slice of toast, buttered it, spread a tablespoon of preserves on it, and gave it to him. He read while he ate. She watched him eat. Her mouth moved.

She made a second slice.

"Well, any hoyt you found?"

He didn't answer.

She had started buttering a third slice (she used to say, "A sick person you ask—a healthy one you give") when Sol said, "I don't want no more."

"I already put butter on."

"You eat it."

She put it in the refrigerator with the other things and cleaned up. She didn't want animals.

She took out her upper plate and rinsed it off.

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At night she kept it on her bureau, in a cup of water covered with an envelope.

"You'll go to bed before I come down you'll turn off the stove?"

"Yeah."

In the bathroom she undressed and hung her clothes on the door. She felt the water in the tub and let the cold water run half a minute. Then she sat on the edge of the tub soaking her feet.

She soaped herself around good before she sat in.

Flora died, it was a wonder? A child survived it was a wonder. Martin from fifteen months—he went into convulsions she tore her eyes out—three years she waited for him. And Frances, after Reba —eleven months, it was her own fault: she was in the ninth month she was running out to the stand and tripped, flat she stretched out on the floor, something it tore inside, Frances could never eat right. And the flu? And later—Leo a bicycle under a truck (that was the end from bicycles—skates Sol had? it was enough), Leo in football a broken nose. . . . Or a Hauptmann, they should only tear him in little pieces. . . .

They survived, it was enough. They should know what she did, a mother, it should come to her eppes appreciation—where? when? This one says, Are you blind? Can't you see the fork is filthy? That one, Don't tell me supper's not ready, I'll scream. Everybody comes to me. What do they want from me? Once a week like a clock she visits her mother—it can't be no other way?

A MOTHER it comes to her cockroach? A cockroach it ironed your shirts, it makes your breakfast, it cleans your bathtub? You had to work out of town, from one furnished room to the next wandering, on Sunday night you unpacked your laundry case which I folded your shirts in it, it was your father hid in the ten-dollar bill in the tissue paper? And how many times I was ironing the shirts you hollered "stupid," for you the collars they weren't soft enough? *You* can open the can? Good! *You* do it. Who needs me? I'm not modern! So in the street throw me away and bring in a modern! That you want? You'll have it! You'll see how good it is! I can cook yet somebody else don't have to spit it out? I can clean?

—Ah! She's insulted!

Why not? Who took from her own mouth you should be well? I lived for myself?

She can't wait Reba she should stop teaching, she needs a baby? OK with me, kid.

I didn't have scarlet fever I could go for a nurse the patients couldn't do enough for me, they'd know what it means to take care.

A second chance you don't get.

Vi iz di oolitsa,
Vi iz der shtieb?
Un vi iz di barishnya
Vus ich hu' zi lieb?

I can't read? God wants from me a diploma? God! Er zorgt zich fer mir? Talk to the wall. Piep lyoodi karaya a sahm lyekhorobiet.*

With the sober man
It stays on his lung
What the drunk
Lets out on his tongue.

Just the Frankel? And the paperhanger Hoffman, two years ago?—it burned to death his daughter she took care of the house—him they let out it's not terrible, he won't hurt anybody—he'll maybe hang himself, but a cage is better? He works again but the eyes are not the same—he don't eat, he don't hear when you talk to him they'll run him over yet. In the spring he's alive he'll make the kitchen—it's ten years.

Slow-slow she got out of the tub— Oy . . . se shvindelt mir in di oygen. From nowhere— What happened? Her jaw almost hit the sink—she caught the edge—her arm trembled—the bench fell over—she was sitting on the floor. Oy a dinner, oy a finster a viester! Tears covered her eyes. God, God—what were they sending her now?

The radiator was almost cold—she took hold of the top and pulled herself up. She hunched over, breathing. She stood up the bench and sat down heavily.

There was blood on the bathmat. Then she saw the blood on her right leg, running down the bone and off the heel.

She raised the leg to the edge of the tub. The blood came faster, running off the calf. She couldn't reach her things on the toilet. She raised her hips and dragged the bench closer. She got hold of the towel, sat back, and pressed a corner of it down on the break in the skin. With her left hand she wiped her calf. The blood was still coming. Her hands were shaking.

"Sam! Sam!"

That man was deaf. Oh *she* should only sleep like him—anything it ever bothered him?

She was drenched with sweat. With the towel in her left hand she wiped her neck and chest. She kept the towel in her lap and leaned over for one of her shoes.

"Did you knock?" It was Sol, calling up from the dining-room door.

"Wake up Pop. I'm screaming my lungs out."

"What fell?"

"Nothing fell—wake up Pop."

"You hurt yourself?"

" 'Siz goornisht, ich zug dir. Wake up Pop."

His father was moaning. In the hall light Sol looked at his father's face. The cheeks and gums were sunken. There was a stain of drool on the pillow. Sol touched him, and Sam opened his eyes.

"Mom wants you in the bathroom."

Sam wiped his mouth and sat up. Before he stood up he pulled his woolen undershirt down

* Corrupt Ukrainian: "The priest chastises the people and sins himself."

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over his crotch, and he held it there with one fist as he went down the hall in his bare feet.

With the other hand, in one motion he pushed in the bathroom door and caught the pair of drawers that had held it shut. He stepped over the gas-heater cord and latched the door. Sonia had covered her breasts with her nightgown.

"So you're not dead—only deaf? Poor man—when do you get a chance to sleep yourself out? Di, az di shlufst nisht, bist di oys mensh."

"What did you do?"

"Dummy! You're blind too? I did! You don't see what I did?"

Sam looked. The blood was still running, and her jaw was shaking.

"You're examining me? It pours from me a plate blood and he looks! Vus kikst di? Vus *ich* fiel, di eppes vaist?"

"Dummy!" he said. "Nor reden vaist di."

The end of the toilet-brush handle was sticking out from under the tub. Sam picked up the brush and cracked the handle across his knee. He tore off a strip of nightgown at the hem, made a tourniquet, and held it.

Sonia wiped her calf and waited. Two or three times he switched hands. The blood had stopped.

"I can hold it. On the dresser mine, go, you'll find cotton. In medicine chest Leo's the tape."

In the bathroom medicine chest there was only what Reba had left. Leo had insisted on this chest when the green porcelain sink under it had replaced the original antique, but he and Sol shaved on the third floor, where a sink and cabinet had been installed for the tenants who had lived in the two rooms there during the 20's; Sam—twice a week—used the kitchen.

"And cheesecloth a yard."

Sam opened the door an inch. Sol was still there.

"Bring up from store the scissors and the roll cheesecloth."

He waited for Sol to get out of eyesight.

"Go already," said Sonia. "To the auction you can run?"

He stepped out and closed the door.

No end. Before Pesach, one side her head it came three stitches—she went to the icebox in the yard, she bumped a nail in the dark. Two years ago she was running to see was he waiting yet in the cold for the trolley Leo when God sent her a typewriter—go know Sol left it there on the floor, the handle sticking out. How many months it went by before her leg healed?

The asbestos shield of the gas-heater crackled. Sonia licked the sweat off her lip. She looked at her shadow on the green window shade.

It's left from me yet a shadow? Blood I poured out, teeth—it's yet a foot left? take it. Zindik nit? —Anybody listens? Three beautiful children in America—a home (from Minkevitz it's anything left?)—you think it comes for nothing, this medina?

When Sam opened the door, Sol called up. "I can't find the cheesecloth."

"On the middle counter, in back from the chair."

Sam leaned over behind Sonia and set the things on the window sill.

"*You* can't move? Sol has to gruppa, he don't know where to look? Hand me the cotton."

He went out again.

The same place where Sol hit it. Exactly where to go they knew. The first time, I came out alive—they're not satisfied. The first time you don't succeed . . . This time you did a good job, Uncle.

Sam came in with the bolt of cheesecloth and the scissors. He latched the door.

"Vus bepshist di dort? Meshigene chaye, what you're doing you know?"

"Vus vaist? di? Di fresst, shloofst, cockst—dir ist frailich."

"Nor di vaist. You don't need I should call Simkus?"

"Toyber Iyd—*di* kenst redden af 'em phone? Which first you have to get the right number. Stop talking. Cut off a yard and a half cheesecloth."

Again meshigene? A lunatic like Chaim she wasn't, her father's brother—when from gallstones he was rolling already on the floor, still he wouldn't let in the doctor, he died he wasn't forty yet and under the stove sacks of coins they found.

While Sam cut the cloth, she wet some cotton with alcohol and held it. Then he loosened the hem-strip. The break in the skin stayed dry. Sonia looked at it and felt it before she applied the cotton. Sam wrapped the cheesecloth over the cotton around the leg and taped it. Sonia lowered her leg, and they watched. The bandage stayed white.

"Such healthy equipments God gave me! Another slave you don't need yet. I'm good another hundred years. I'm so good off! You can go back to sleep."

Sol was sitting at the top of the stairs, reading.

Fifteen minutes later Sonia came out, red and sweating, in her nightgown—her shoes on, laces flapping, over white cotton stockings. Sol came out of the parlor, the back room that had been Reba's in the days of the tenants—and that Reba one night had refused to sleep in, the night of the day a stranger had died in her bed, a customer who had fainted in the store and was helped upstairs; that night Sam was sent to sleep there, and Reba slept with her mother.

"Look how pale he is. You worried for your mother? I slipped. You thought it's something terrible? A scratch, a nothing—ich vais? You didn't have to wait. —Shah!" Her eyes widened, she stiffened and threw out an arm.

Sol looked at her.

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"Listen."

She was listening. After a half-minute she looked at Sol to see if he heard anything. He raised his eyebrows and showed a palm.

"Pop locked up?" she whispered.

"I guess so."

In the summer her pocketbook had disappeared and Sam had found it in the alley empty. Ben argued she had dropped it there on the way home from the bakery, but how could she have gone to bed without missing it—she put it under her pillow at night. You don't know what you're doing any more, he said. But a robber could climb in through the parlor—the windows were unlatched.

"Leo?"

No answer.

"Who's there?"

They listened. The bed creaked up the hall.

"I'll go down and look," said Sol.

"Azoy zol *ich* laiben!"

She started and threw out her arm again—then relaxed, blew at the strands of hair on her eyes, and wiped her neck. She had heard the hum of the refrigerator.

Sam came down the hall.

"You locked up?"

"Vuhden."

"Vus shreist di? Once the store door you didn't forget, and he came right up to the bedroom the politsman he woke us up? Go down and see it's somebody trying to break in."

He went down and in a minute came back up.

"You're dreaming. Nahr, di vainst di vainig shloofst: vair darf di zolst a halbe nacht arimvolgern?"

"It's snowing," called Sol.

He had identified the tapping on the windows and gone up the hall into the front bedroom. He raised the shade.

Sam came up to the window and watched. The street was covered, and the sidewalks. The snow was falling thick in the light of the street lamp. No one was walking. The trolley tracks were covered.

"A shaine zach," said Sam.

"A shaine zach! Reba darf varten in shnai until the trolley scratches itself out? She had to go out? Her shoes are like paper. Zi shtait un friert."

They stood there watching.

Sonia sang, in Yiddish:

The moon and the stars
See what we're doing:
Horses turn to cars—
The cat's still mewing;
There's no end to wars
Or old men chewing;
If children, then scars—
Doing, undoing.

She hiccupped. "Vair gedainkt mich? . . . Leo! Kind! He has to wander around yet, he has a warm bed at home? He knows a clean bed I made him tonight."

She turned to Sam. "Ifshtai frie, hairst? Somebody falls on the cellar door you'll have a new story. Take up the shovel and go out before you eat."

Sam turned back to the bed, and Sonia reached out to pull down the window-shade. Sol had fixed his forehead against the glass.

"Come away from the window. You want a cold?"

As he turned away, Sol saw a cockroach in the hall light in the doorway.

"Look—a guest."

"What? An animal? Where? Where? It's the snow it brings him out."

She tiptoed to the spot Sol pointed to, but when she brought down her loose shoe there was no crunch—they knew the bug had escaped.

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Hebraism & Hellenism Now

Milton Himmelfarb

MATTHEW ARNOLD'S *Culture and Anarchy* was published one hundred years ago. In an inaugural lecture, Roy Fuller, the Professor of Poetry at Oxford, reminds us that "Sweetness and Light," the first chapter, was Arnold's final lecture when *he* was Professor of Poetry. "Hebraism and Hellenism" is another chapter.

There is a difficulty in assessing great men, an irony that will out; but the irony may tell us more about ourselves than about its objects. Who has not written that Philosophy I term paper demolishing Hegel? The temptation is old, and the description of it is old. Not completely, but yet in some stubborn part of ourselves we would rather forget that if we are taller than our predecessors, maybe it is because we stand on their shoulders. And when a man's name is linked to "sweetness and light"—never mind what it actually meant for him, and for Swift before him—the temptation to patronize him becomes all the stronger. Arnold respected Goethe, and Goethe may have something to tell us: No man is a hero to his valet; true; but perhaps more because the valet is a valet than because no man is a hero.

Is Arnold relevant to us? He refused to be relevant even to his contemporaries, in the terms in which they understood relevance. Relevant or not, he can be useful.

• We are solemnly approving of the individualist mob. Arnold says: "Thinking by batches of fifties is . . . as fatal as thinking by batches of thousands."

• For us "nonconformity" is good and "establishment" bad. Arnold on nonconformity and establishment does not give us a final, full truth; but how many truths are final and full? He says:

> The great works by which, not only in literature, art, and science generally, but in religion itself, the human spirit has manifested its approaches to totality, and to a full, harmonious perfection, and by which it stimulates and helps forward the world's general perfection, come, not from Nonconformists, but from men who either belong to Establishments or have been trained in them . . . Milton, Baxter, Wesley.

• Another good word for us is "dissent." If I am not mistaken, the founders of *Dissent* had in mind, favorably, a phrase of Arnold's, "the Dissidence of Dissent." He did not coin that phrase. "The Dissidence of Dissent, and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion" was the slogan of a journal of the English Nonconformists a hundred years ago. For Arnold the Nonconformists' "Dissidence of Dissent" expressed all that was cranky, Philistine, "hole-in-corner."

• And last, for archeological interest:

> I remember my father [Thomas, of Rugby], in one of his unpublished letters written more than forty years ago, when the political and social state of the country was gloomy and troubled, and there were riots in many places, goes on, after strongly insisting on the badness and foolishness of the government, and on the harm and dangerousness of our feudal and aristocratical constitution of society, and ends thus: "As for rioting, the old Roman way of dealing with *that* is always the right one; flog the rank and file, and fling the ringleaders from the Tarpeian Rock!"

(Arnold withdrew this crusty remembrance from later editions.)

> . . . for the sake of the present, but far more for the sake of the future, the lovers of culture are . . . the opposers of anarchy.

Thus can Arnold be relevant by his very irrelevance, by the shock of his strangeness, by—a word he would not have welcomed—his nonconformity. And he did believe that "the men of culture are the true apostles of equality."

Arnold defines culture, or rather enumerates its elements, astutely. Making culture pretty nearly the sum of all good things, he takes care that it will be if not impossible, then difficult to show that his idea of culture is defective, lacking in some essential. He is as clever as we; knowing we will look for exposed salients to attack, he strengthens them. He defines culture, or inventories it, positively. Yet his "culture" affects us not altogether differently from the Polish Marxist philosopher Kolakowski's "socialism." Kolakowski's "What is Socialism?" tells us what socialism is not. For instance, it is not a system

> in which a person who has committed no crime sits at home waiting for the police. In which

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> there are more spies than nurses and more people in prisons than in hospitals. In which one is forced to resort to lies and compelled to be a thief. . . . In which the philosophers and writers always say the same thing as the generals and ministers, but always after them. . . .

And so on. There are seventy-two things that socialism is not. "But now listen attentively, we will tell you what socialism is—well, then, socialism is a good thing." Kolakowski enumerates negatively and Arnold positively, but like Kolakowski's socialism, Arnold's culture is a Good Thing.

What G. K. Chesterton says of Christianity, many socialists say of *their* religion: it has not failed, it has never been tried. Matthew Arnold redivivus would say culture has not failed, it has never been tried. For culture is Arnold's real religion. To him it is more or less what before his revolutionary times, the 19th century, religion proper had been to the great mass of mankind. He sees the human spirit, and more particularly the Western spirit, as having not one but two parts, Hebraism as well as Hellenism—"the governing idea of Hellenism is *spontaneity of consciousness*; that of Hebraism, *strictness of conscience*"—but he gives the lion's share to Hellenism.

HELLENISM IS the specifically Greek tradition. Arnold was not one who mocked "*culture*! . . . a smattering of the two dead languages of Greek and Latin." How could you be a Hellenist, Hellenic, if you could not read the Greek authors in their own words? But more generally, Hellenism is mind, intellect—a free mind and a free intellect, resistant to cant and prejudice, connected with imagination and emotion, open to all excellence, past, present, and future. It is mind and intellect flexible and self-correcting, the enemy of fanaticism, rigidity, and one-sidedness. Therefore culture is largely Hellenic. Culture is the best that has been known and thought, the best that has been thought and said in the world, a stream of thought upon everything, the study of perfection, that power which enables us to see things as they really are. Or rather, Hellenism is that power. Those predicates can be assigned almost indifferently to either Hellenism or culture as their subject.

On the other hand, ". . . to Hebraise . . . is, to sacrifice all other sides of our being to the religious side . . . . it leads to a narrow and twisted growth of our religious side itself, and to a failure in perfection."

What has struck many Jews in such definitions or descriptions of Hebraism is that Arnold was not talking about, was in fact not concerned to talk about, the Jews and the Jews' religion, character, ways of being. Since the Maccabees, the Jewish tradition itself has insisted on the distinctness of Hebraism from Hellenism; but Arnold was defining the spirit, as he understood it, of sectarian Protestantism in 19th-century England. His Hebraism keeps pointing to sectarian Protestant bibliolatry—the doctrine of the open Bible carried to a kind of democratic extreme. In that doctrine anyone can read his Bible as well as anyone else, and can understand it as well.

Bibliolatry is not Jewish. Classically, how a Jew read and understood the Bible was regulated by the learned, rabbinical tradition. No ignorant Jew, in Spain or Germany or Poland, could pretend, even to himself, that he understood the very Hebrew or Aramaic of the Bible or Talmud as well as a learned Jew. Why then did Jews never demand an open—i.e., vernacular—Bible with nearly the same vehemence as Christians? I think the answer is to be found in this: that many Christians were persuaded that the priests kept the Bible in Latin to keep it from the people, a priestly monopoly; while Jews knew that at least in principle, it was the ideal and the effort of Jewish society that every (male) Jew should be taught all the sacred literature he could master—and, along the way, the Hebrew and Aramaic in which it was written. When modern Jews began to rebel against Hebrew in favor of the vernacular, that was not because they resented a rabbinical monopoly. What modern Jews resented, in fact, was that the rabbis wanted Hebrew *not* to be a monopoly. The rebels thought that their time, and their children's time, was being wasted by rabbis who wanted everyone to be rabbinically learned, or almost. (Actually, the scholars tell us that the first full-length translation of any kind was Jewish: the Hebrew Bible into Greek. In traditional Jewish Bible editions, the Aramaic version has pride of place next to the Hebrew text. It alone shares with the text the distinction of being vocalized, and in square characters.)

Some years ago Isaiah Berlin revived Archilochus's saying: The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows One Big Thing. Hellenism is fox, Hebraism is hedgehog. Among the many things that the fox knows—that Arnold, *ondoyant et divers*, the foxy Hellenist, knows—is the necessity of hedgehog Hebraism. Looking about him, Arnold sees an excess of Hebraism and an insufficiency of Hellenism: heavy mid-Victorian England is too Hebraic and insufficiently Hellenic. He tries to right the imbalance. At other times in history, he says, there was too little Hebraism and too much Hellenism. If he had lived then, he would have tried to right *that* imbalance. But in England, with its Barbarian aristocracy, Philistine middle class, and unknown, half-frightening, half-appealing Populace, his duty is to recall his countrymen to more Hellenism and less Hebraism.

He is telling the truth. That is how he sees his England. But beneath his estimate of what his England needs, there is something more general. Arnold believes that while it is possible to have too much Hellenism, it is easy to have too much Hebraism.

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ONLY THREE years after *Culture and Anarchy* the work of a young man, of a genius greater though darker than Arnold's, was published—the *Birth of Tragedy*. Arnold's Hellenism stands under the sign of Apollo, Nietzsche's under the sign of Dionysus. For Arnold the great figure of Hellenism, actual as well as symbolic, is Socrates: he invokes Socrates in what we may call the peroration of *Culture and Anarchy*. For Nietzsche, Socrates is a fake.

Arnold's Hellenism is like Freudian ego, his Hebraism like superego. He wants to lighten the burden of Hebraic superego, letting in Hellenic ego. The ego is the guardian of the reality principle, and one definition that Arnold gives of Hellenism is that it helps us to see things as they really are. Nietzsche agrees that Hebraism is superego. Much more than Arnold, he wants us liberated from Hebraic superego. But for Nietzsche the liberation is not in the name of ego. It is in the name of id—passion, instinct, primal force.

The god of ego is Apollo, the god of id Dionysus. Apollo is "*ordre et beauté,/Luxe, calme, et volupté*" (especially if we are not vulgar about *luxe* and *volupté*). Dionysus is orgy, ecstasy—etymologically "ecstasy" is standing outside one's self—derangement of the senses, blood, lawlessness. Dionysus is the horse, Apollo the bit and bridle. It is quite clear which is primary and which secondary. Roy Campbell says:

> You praise the firm restraint with
> which they write—
> I'm with you there, of course.
> They use the snaffle and the curb all right,
> But where's the bloody horse?

That is, id-Dionysus first and ego-Apollo a long way second.

Is it to be guilty of an it-is-no-accident, Leninist kind of argument to recall that Campbell was a fascist—called himself a fascist—and fought in Spain for Franco? A spokesman for Dionysian theater (the producer, in fact, of *Dionysus in 69*), a man of the Left rather than the Right, has said: "Ecstasy doesn't come cheap. You pay for it in blood." He has written: "The hidden fear I have about the new expression is that its forms come perilously close to ecstatic fascism."

Who are, or should be, the chief custodians of Hellenism? Professors of Greek. When Arnold thought of professors of Greek, he was likely to think of his friend Jowett, priest of the Church of England, translator of Plato, Master of Balliol, Vice-Chancellor of Oxford. But so was Nietzsche a professor of Greek, and so is or was Norman O. Brown. From Jowett to Brown—that is the history of Hellenism since Arnold. If Arnold were our contemporary, he might say that the balance had tipped again and had to be redressed again, particularly since the preponderant Hellenism of our time is not at all what he had in mind.

As a cozy, even endearing specimen of our Hellenism, consider the Beatles' *Yellow Submarine*. The Blue Meanies are the enemy, cruel, destructive. For them, "yes" is a dirty word. When an inferior clicks his heels and salutes his superior, he does not say, "Yes, sir." A Blue Meanie says, "No, sir."

The submarine, as a phallic symbol, is a symbol of life. The submarine's element is the ocean: the ocean is the womb; it is the mother of all living things, the origin of life. Yellow is life: the sun is yellow, it nurtures life.

Blue is coldness, gloom, death: laws that forbid pleasure are blue laws, blue Monday is suicide Monday. In the middle of the film a throwaway line, apparently unmotivated, is spoken: "That's funny, you don't look blueish." It makes no difference how this was intended: trust the tale, not the teller. Blueish, Jewish; blue is Hebraism.

Yellow is Hellenism. The end of the film is an insistent yellow flashing: Yes, love, yes, love, yes, love. It celebrates the victory of yellow and yes and love over their enemies, blue and no and—what is the enemy of love? Hate? Death?

Celebrating yes is rather more highbrow than this may suggest. Nietzsche praises the yea-sayers and dispraises the nay-sayers. Joyce's *Ulysses* ends much as *Yellow Submarine* does. In that famous soliloquy of Molly Bloom's, she says yes, yes, yes—to life, to love; to adultery.

And indeed, Hebraism has a way of saying no and not. The preeminent sequence of Hebraic noes and nots is in the twentieth chapter of Exodus (with a variant in the fifth chapter of Deuteronomy):

> I am the LORD thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any manner of likeness, of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them nor serve them, for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God. . . . Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain. Thou shalt not murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife . . . nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

Is *Yellow Submarine* exoteric, public propaganda for Dionysian Hellenism? How could it be? It is pleasant not ecstatic, calm not violent, tranquil not lawless. On the surface it is even sexless. At most, Dionysianism is hinted at—in its "yes," with its recollection of Molly Bloom, and its "love," which is ambiguous. The Hellenism that *Yellow Submarine* exemplifies for us and commends to us may well be Apollonian. Which leads to a supposition. There is a play about an extraordinary physician, Dr. Knock, who has dis-

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covered that *un homme bien portant est un malade qui s'ignore*—a well man is a sick man unaware. In like manner, and from one point of view, perhaps, Apollonian Hellenism is sometimes Dionysian Hellenism unaware, or without the courage to be aware.

We come now to a difficult question, the question of woman, the womanly. Routinely, the neo-feminists of our time condemn the Jewish tradition for subordinating women. Less is said about the Greek tradition—Sparta, even Periclean Athens; or Plato.

Matthew Arnold considers himself to be a disciple of Spinoza, but it is with Nietzsche that Spinoza joins hands, in hostility to woman and the womanly. We know what Nietzsche says about woman, and about Hebraism. For Nietzsche, Hebraism—Judaism and Christianity—is the resentment and revenge of the weak: women and slaves. Spinoza, contemptuous of the moral and psychological state of the Jews, says that the foundations of their religion have effeminated their character. That is, Judaism has made the Jews womanish. For Spinoza, pity is *muliebris misericordia*, womanish pity—not in praise of woman but in dispraise of pity.

Though etymologies prove nothing, they can suggest something. Greek *hystera* means "womb," as in surgical words like "hysterectomy"; but its best-known derivative is "hysteria": Hellenically, the womb generates hysteria. From Hebrew *rehem*, "womb," derives *rahamim*, "pity": Hebraically, the womb generates pity. Hellenism has something anti-woman, anti-womanly, misogynist; and so has our culture, high or low, under Apollo's sign or Dionysus'. The eponymous Marquis de Sade, a hero for our time, was homosexual. One picks up a newspaper and sees a review of an edition of Oscar Wilde's criticism. The review quotes the editor as recalling for us that André Gide, having read Wilde first, says he has found Nietzsche less exciting than he would have been otherwise; and that for Thomas Mann many of Nietzsche's aphorisms might have been expressed by Wilde, and vice versa. It was because Wilde was what he was, the reviewer goes on to say, that he linked art with lawlessness and criminality, and independently of Nietzsche was moved to transvalue all values.

Surely Arnold never heard of his older, Italian Jewish contemporary Samuel David Luzzatto, but Luzzatto also thought a great deal about Hellenism and Hebraism—which he called Atticism and Judaism/Abrahamism. Like Arnold, Luzzatto recognizes the necessity of both; but unlike Arnold, he gives priority to Hebraism. Luzzatto cannot forgive Spinoza that *muliebris misericordia*. Luzzatto prefers the Rabbis' "He who feels no pity is not of the seed of Abraham"; and quotes the 19th-century German classicist Böckh, "Mercy is no Hellenic virtue." (What I know about Luzzatto I owe to Shalom Spiegel's *Hebrew Reborn*.)

Not long ago the rabbi of my congregation preached on the unpromising lesson in Leviticus (*Shemini*) about clean and unclean foods. Conceding the force of the jokes about stomach religion and of the arguments for a concern with higher things than hooves and cuds, fins and scales, he said only that Judaism—the Jewish tradition—is a unitary, a whole regimen. The Rabbis, serious about what is kosher and what is not, legislated, in what he insisted was the same spirit, about other things as well. He cited Tosefta 'Avodah Zarah:

> Whoever sits in the stadium [where gladiators fight] is a murderer [sharing the guilt, with the others there, for encouraging gladiatorial combat]. But R. Nathan says it is permitted, for two reasons: because he [sc., a Jew in the stadium] can shout [for mercy, when the victorious gladiators ask whether to spare or to kill the defeated] and thereby save lives; and by testimony can help a woman to be remarried.

The last parts needs explanation: A Jew who has been in the stadium can testify that he has seen the woman's husband die—a Jewish captive of the Romans sent as a gladiator to the arenas. Then, known to be a widow, she is allowed to remarry.

So for those most Hebraic of Hebrews, the Rabbis, helping a woman to remarry was a motive not unworthy of mention with saving lives. Womanish. As Edmund Wilson has just reminded us, Tacitus called the Jews enemies of the human race because, among other reasons, they were uncivilized—un-Hellenic—in that they refused to practice infanticide. (Infanticide means killing babies, usually girls—in the ancient world the popular means of keeping children few enough to prevent the parceling of estates.) The blues have been saying no for a long time, even to such sensible, pleasurable, useful, or civilized things as gladiatorial shows and infanticide.

Maybe *Yellow Submarine*, in indicting blueness and meanness, lacks the courage, the honesty, to admit to itself what the worship of Dionysus requires. Nietzsche did not lack courage or honesty. He was explicit about what follows once we say—as he says—that the God of Hebraism is dead. What follows is that we recognize Jewish (or Jewish and Christian) mercy, and kindred notions, to be nothing more than the restraints that the envious weak, women and slaves, try to impose on the strong; and the duty of the strong—aristocratic, heroically hard—to throw off those restraints. Nietzsche said he would believe only in a god who could dance. Like its original, the Bacchae of Euripides, *Dionysus in 69* is about dancing; and the producer (a Jew), who knows about ecstatic fascism and about blood as the price of ecstasy, is described as rejecting Judeo-Christian culture. At least he is candid: "If you dance with Dionysus you kill Pentheus—that is the action of the play."

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For her "Temptations of Cultural Fascism" (*Wiener Library Bulletin*, Winter 1968-69), Renee Winegarten takes the title from Saul Bellow: Herzog's "cultural fascism." She is interested in writers who are liberals, or radicals, or Jews, yet are culturally Dionysian:

> The fact that a man really belongs with those who would be the first victims of the Dionysian urge does nothing to lessen the fascination, just as the fact that he is neither aristocratic nor heroic does little to prevent the exaltation of the reader's imagination at the idea of an élite of noble and remarkable souls to which he can fancy he belongs. . . .
>
> Until very recently, for the majority of students and lovers of literature (as Lionel Trilling pointed out), there was no accord between what stirred them in books and practical political life: aristocrats in fancy, they remained democrats or radicals in fact. Yet that disruptive and subversive element in literature which served many readers merely as a stimulant for the imagination has now descended into the streets, in the United States, in France and Germany, even in England. The aristocratic outlook of the exceptional individual or the rare élite has been adopted by those for whom it was never intended: the dissatisfied, half-educated mass of the young. . . . [There] are tokens of a new kind of cultural fascism (emanating from the Left instead of the Right).

An English poet and painter has described the "ambience of tenderness, intelligence, total licence and crackling undercurrents of a kind of sad cruelty" in the Dionysian milieu he used to frequent. From the visitors' graffiti at a Happening he staged, he learned that "what was hell to puritans was heaven to sadistic fetishists."

For *Yellow Submarine,* it is the puritan Blue Meanies who are sadistic; and in a Catholic and ecumenical journal of religious thought, a Presbyterian theologian publishes a "Manifesto for a Dionysian Theology," introduces it by citing Nietzsche's dancing god, and then is silent about killing Pentheus, and ecstatic fascism, and mercy as womanish, slave morality. Wholesome anti-uptightness—that seems to be what he wants to suppose Dionysianism is, and wants us to suppose.

WHY SHOULD we keep paying the homage of embarrassment or hypocrisy to traditional religion's virtue? For moderns the dominant religion, the religion that has superseded religion, is a cross between Arnold's culture and Nietzsche's art. Obedient to Nietzsche, we faithfully assert the primacy of the aesthetic: let me, as the lawyers say, incorporate by reference Trilling's *Beyond Culture.* I would only mention a further resemblance between traditional and modern religion. When the God of religion was pronounced dead, the god of art was proclaimed. That god—or one of his persons—was beauty, but in no time at all "beauty" became just as quaint as "God," just as otiose and shy-making. Where the central principle of the new religion was, a void now is.

In the old religion, God created. In the new, man—especially the artist—creates. The characteristically modern, Nietzschean insistence is on art as the creative act and element above all others. May this not be in part, as some have suggested, masculine protest, womb-envy? (If so, it is probably truer of the appreciators, the Berensons, than of the artists themselves, who tend to be earthy, not given to mooning about Creativity.) Is "creative" to be taken seriously, has it to do with "create," is it more than just another OK word, interchangeable with our "relevant" and "meaningful" and with yesterday's "dynamic"? Then, since life is what it is, willy-nilly we have to recognize the womanly—the maternal—as most nearly creative, simply. When Judah Ha-levi said of Greek culture that it bore flowers but no fruit, he knew Greek culture (in Arabic). He meant that it was intellectual and aesthetic rather than moral; but he also knew about traditional Mediterranean forms of masculine protest.

Before we leave the theme of woman and the womanly, a final irony at Arnold's expense is unavoidable. A man so severe about bathos—he thought it characteristically Philistine—should himself stay clear of bathos. In the matter of marriage with a deceased wife's sister, he did not stay clear. That was not, as we may think, only comic stuff for W. S. Gilbert and Bernard Shaw. By Church of England law, marriage with a deceased wife's sister was forbidden. Non-Anglican reformers adduced the licitness of such marriage in Leviticus, among other arguments. Knowing what Arnold knew about Sparta and Athens ("the race which invented the Muses") and Rome, scourge that he was of the bathetic, he yet allowed himself this:

> . . . who, that is not manacled and hoodwinked by his Hebraism, can believe that, as to love and marriage, our reason and the necessities of our humanity have their true, sufficient, and divine law expressed for them by the voice of any Oriental and polygamous nation like the Hebrews? Who, I say, will believe, when he really considers the matter, that where the feminine nature, the feminine ideal, and our relations to them, are brought into question, the delicate and apprehensive genius of the Indo-European race, the race which invented the Muses, and chivalry, and the Madonna, is to find its last word on this question in the institutions of a Semitic people, whose wisest king had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines?

("Indo-European race" was the science of his day.)

Naturally, Arnold's Hebraic-Hellenic dualism is not original with him. In the early Christian centuries Tertullian asked, *Quid Athenis cum Hierosolymis,* what has Athens to do with

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Jerusalem? In Arnold's time Ernest Renan, whom he thought well of, addressed a "Prayer at the Acropolis" to Apollo, god of clarity, reason, and harmony, begging forgiveness for having bothered so much with unclear, unreasonable, and discordant Semitic things. But, as Trilling suggests, it is Jews who are most conscious of the dualism. Not only Trilling's Heine and Börne; and not only Talmud, Judah Ha-levi, and Luzzatto; but also, in this century, Hermann Cohen and (in COMMENTARY) Leo Strauss.*

Arnold cites Heine as a Jew who, because he is modern, prefers Hellenism to Hebraism. (In Heine's later years he was to say that being Greek is a young man's game, immature; one ages into being a Jew.) There have also been the Jewish Nietzscheans. Chernikhovsky's "Before the Statue [= idol; *pesel*] of Apollo" is even more anti-Hebraic than the title suggests, because that Apollo looks remarkably Dionysian. Like the philosophical since antiquity, the poet takes for granted that man creates gods in his image. The passionate, warrior Israelites had the passionate, warrior god YHWH, Chernikhovsky says; but then alas! they became Jews, "and bound him in phylactery thongs." And so Babel, with his Cossacks. For a Jewish Nietzschean, the Jews were not so virtuously chaste (peace-loving, etc.) as they liked to believe. They were only eunuchs, self-made: womanish.

Arnold speaks of the miracles of the rise and spread of Christianity; but if only as an admirer of Spinoza he does not really believe in miracles. Neither do we, of course. It is less that we have disproved miracles than that we have defined them away. By definition, for us, there can be no such thing, especially since our very science is statistical and probabilistic. If a miracle is not fraud or delusion, or suggested by superstition and ignorance, it is merely statistically unusual: as, if this table were to fly upward at my command; or a voice were to speak to Moses out of a bush that burned but was not consumed. For Arnold as for us, "miracle" is what it was at the beginning—"marvel" is from the same root. One gapes, one stares at miracle and marvel.

A rereading of Arnold must make a Jew realize how the old Jewish sentiment of being (or of ancestors having been) caught up in miracle has come to life again. In spite of miracle's low standing, in spite of its nonexistence by definition, our renewed consciousness of miracle—of miraculous things done to and through Jews—has brought about a curious reversal. Arnold, who knows of the "cultivated and philosophical Jews," commends their Socinian-like estimate of Jesus to Christians. Jews of that sort have also been cultivated and philosophical about God, and miracle. Today they may find it less difficult than Christians, similarly cultivated and philosophical, to imagine the God of history (and of tradition) present and active.

Not that Arnold paid much attention to the Jews and Judaism of his time. Why should a Victorian Englishman in his position have noticed the Jews and their Judaism otherwise than incidentally? That is almost the best Jews can expect. Even incidentally, it would have been easy for him, natural, to say harsh things. Both in what he says and in what he does not say, Arnold is kind to us. By the standards of the 18th, 19th, and first half of the 20th centuries, he is a friend.

Certainly he was more a friend than his father. Liking plural establishments rather than disestablishment, Matthew Arnold approved the establishment of the synagogue, as in France. Thomas Arnold, who insisted on the harm and dangerousness of a feudal and aristocratical constitution, clearly was not illiberal, but Trilling's *Matthew Arnold* has this to say of him:

> . . . with Jews he was intransigent, believing that they should be barred from the universities and from citizenship. He held that citizenship required an almost mystic homogeneity, which was supplied . . . in the modern world by religion. He denounced "that low Jacobinical notion of citizenship, that a man acquires a right to it by the accident of his being littered [human beings are born, animals are littered—MH] *inter quattuor maria* [on the nation's soil], or because he pays taxes." England, he said, was the land of Englishmen, not of Jews, and "lodgers" had no claims to more than an honorary citizenship. . . . he dreaded the possibility of examining a Jew in history at the University of London . . . and of having to avoid calling Jesus the Christ.

From Cecil Roth we learn that, though Jews fared much better in England than almost anywhere else, well into the 19th century

> it was possible to maintain in the courts Lord Coke's doctrine that the Jews were in law perpetual enemies, "for between them, as with the devils, whose subjects they are, and the Christian there can be no peace."

WHAT is the lexicographical evidence, in the Oxford English Dictionary? (We will no doubt find worse if we consult OED's German or even French counterpart.) OED's first definition of "Jew" is: "A person of Hebrew race; an Israelite." So much for adherence to a faith, identification with a history, practice of a ritual, study of a culture; or Jonah: "I am a Hebrew, and I worship the LORD the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land." OED's second definition is more interesting still: "*transf.* As a name of opprobrium or reprobation; *spec.* applied to a grasping or extortionate moneylender or usurer, or a trader who drives hard bargains or deals craftily." Thus Coleridge: "Jacob is a regular Jew, and practices all sorts of tricks and wiles." Coleridge! "Jew-bail" is insufficient bail, and Captain Marryat's "Jew carts"

* "Jerusalem and Athens," June 1967.

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carry stolen goods. As a verb ("colloq.") it means "To cheat or overreach, in the way attributed to Jewish traders or usurers," teste Dante Gabriel Rossetti: "But as to his doing and jawings and jewings, William brought me the news."

This sort of thing could have only one effect on Jews who wanted European culture to be theirs and took its standards as theirs. Rahel Varnhagen writes of "what was so long the greatest shame, the bitterest sorrow and suffering to me, my Jewish birth. . . ." In one of his moods Heine says that Judaism is not a religion, it is a misfortune; being a Jew is like being a hunchback.

In good Franz Josef's time, two Jews in a Viennese cafe are arguing about Dr. Herzl's idea. Neither can convince the other. A third Jew has been listening attentively, and they ask him to judge. He says he is not a proper, impartial judge: he regards himself as a follower of Dr. Herzl's—a Zionist, if you will—though, to be sure, with three reservations. Will he be kind enough to explain? Gladly.

First, why Hebrew? Everybody who is anybody speaks German. Besides, reviving Hebrew is a mad, utopian scheme. Patiently the great Semitist Renan has reminded the half-baked enthusiasts that Hebrew has long been dead, and that in all of human history not one dead language has ever been brought to life again, to be spoken by children and shopgirls as well as the learned.

Second, why Palestine? You would have to look hard to find another place so infertile, rocky, and eroded, with such desert and insalubrious marsh, such a lack of natural resources, harbors, and navigable waterways. Besides, people are already living there, the Arabs. Israel Zangwill is right: we should accept the British government's offer of Uganda. It is fertile, and the natives will give no trouble for hundreds and hundreds of years.

Third, Dr. Herzl's idea is a great idea. It needs a great people. And whom do you waste it on? Jews!

As an example of usage for a new edition of OED—the present one stops at the 20th century—I submit an order of the day by Lieut.-General Sir Evelyn Barker, G.O.C. Palestine, after the explosion in the King David Hotel:

> . . . you will put out of bounds to all ranks all Jewish establishments, cafes, restaurants, shops, and private dwellings. No British soldier is to have any social intercourse with any Jew. . . . the troops . . . will be punishing the Jews in a way the race dislikes as much as any, by striking at their pockets and showing our contempt for them.

That was in 1946, and by one British military authority. In 1967 the Institute for Strategic Studies, in London, had other things to say of "the race." Predicting that the 1967 war would be "studied in staff colleges for many years to come," the Institute for Strategic Studies said that "the performance of the Israeli Defense Force" was "like the campaigns of the younger Napoleon." (For Napoleon it was the English who were a nation of shopkeepers.)

When the *Saturday Review* asked Harold Macmillan whether Great Britain should try to be like Athens or like Sweden, he ruled out Athens —living on slavery, imperialist, warlike, and overtaken by decay and death. He continued:

> It may well be that Britain will someday follow in the footsteps of Sweden, but if so I'm glad I won't be here to see it.
>
> No, the future I hope for Britain is more like that of Israel. In the time of Elizabeth we were only two million people, in the time of Marlborough only five or six million, in the time of Napoleon only ten million. The other day, while the world debated, Israel's three millions imposed their will on their enemies. They had what any great people need—resolution, courage, determination, pride. These are what really count in men and nations.

The new OED may have to enter a new definition.

For a modern Jew this is miraculous. A modern Jew is a man whose outlook has been apt to be the one we find in OED—and Heine's equation, and the Viennese joke. Some of the most significant modern Jews, native neither to England nor to English culture, have looked upon England and English ways as models: Freud, Chaim Weizmann, even Ahad Ha'am. Now comes Macmillan—of the line of Churchill, Gladstone, Wellington—and says what he says. With our eyes we see and with our ears we hear the fulfillment of the promise thrice made to Abraham, that the nations of the earth would bless themselves by him and his descendants. How long we have been accustomed to the fulfillment of other prophecies, that the nations would curse themselves by us!

Here is unexpectedness, improbability, uniqueness. That so many are unimpressed does not mean it is unimpressive. Aesthetically almost, as a spectacle if as nothing else, it should impress. When Toynbee, who is supposed to have a historical imagination, applies to Israel a canting, shabby substitute for thought—"neo-colonialism" —he only shows us that Goethe's valets are numerous and diverse.

On the Sabbath of Passover the Torah lesson is read in which the Lord, complementing His redemption of the children of Israel, vouchsafes a revelation of Himself to Moses—or, rabbinically, reveals His "thirteen attributes": ". . . compassionate and gracious, slow to anger," etc. The Prophetical lesson, from Ezekiel, is also about redemption, but future rather than past—redemption that is at the same time revelation:

> The hand of the Lord was upon me, and He . . . set me down in the midst of a valley, and it was full of bones . . . very many . . . and . . . very

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dry. And He said to me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered: O Lord GOD, Thou knowest. Again He said to me: Prophesy to these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and ye shall live . . . and ye shall know that I am the LORD. So I prophesied as I was commanded . . . and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet. . . . Then He said to me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost, we are clean cut off. Therefore prophesy and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you home into the land of Israel. . . . And I will put my Spirit within you, and ye shall live . . . then ye shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken, and I have done it, says the LORD.

Jewish triumphalism, some will say; chauvinism, or actually militarism (of megalomaniacal would-be Napoleons)—even some Jews will say that. Not so. Over all lies the shadow of 1939-1945. Unable to bear thinking of 1939-1945, I appeal to Wittgenstein: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one should not speak." Dissatisfaction with God's justice is as old with the Jews as Abraham; but after the crematoria, theodicy—arguing for God's justice—is more difficult than arguing for His existence, difficult as that is.

If there is any answer at all, if there is any answer for Jews, its elements must be in that chapter from Ezekiel that is read in the synagogue on the Sabbath of Passover. The dry bones are the bones of the dead. It is only figuratively that the dead live again; nothing can cancel out their deaths. Yet there has also been redemption (*Hatikvah*—not a good poem but, as an anthem, informative—echoes Ezekiel. The despair Ezekiel quotes, "Our hope is lost," is *avedah tiqwatenu*. The refrain of *Hatikvah* is *'od lo' avedah tiqwatenu,* "our hope is not yet lost.") In Isaiah the Savior God of Israel, a God who conceals Himself, shapes light and creates darkness, makes weal and creates woe. It should be possible to mourn darkness and woe, and to rejoice over light and weal.

FOR THE religion of culture and art, theodicy is an even more nearly impossible enterprise than for the older religion. The religion of culture and art is a religion of salvation. If salvation has any meaning not twisted by perverseness and heartlessness, then it is the god of *that* religion who has failed most completely and who is, or should be, dead. Among an infinity of possible citations, this, mild, is from Ralf Dahrendorf's *Society and Democracy in Germany*:

> . . . thousands of alumni of German Gymnasia did not let the cultivated humanism of their intellectual formation prevent them from stamping out people like ants whom one may not notice because one is so busy looking up to the stars that one does not watch the streets.

"Cultivated humanism" is Apollonian Hellenism. What might a Dahrendorf not have had cause to say if those Gymnasia had been largely Dionysian? (Let this be said for Apollo, that of all the—it goes without saying, non-Hebraic—gods, he is the least given to drinking blood.)

For modern Jews now, the status of Hellenism may be lower than at any time since we became modern; and if only for that reason—though I think not only—the status of Hebraism may be correspondingly higher. Ezekiel was Hebraic simply. He called Renan's and Chernikhovsky's statue-idols wood and stone; reproved our lust to worship wood and stone, as the nations do; and swore in the Lord's name that with mighty arm and outstretched hand (with which He had redeemed and led Israel forth from the Egyptian house of bondage) He would be King over us. For us, now, that Hebraism is still insufficient. Even Luzzatto would agree; and so testify even the miracles we have seen. But if by itself Hebraism is insufficient, and too simple, yet now, more than in many years, we truly hold it to be essential, and its necessary proportion to be high.

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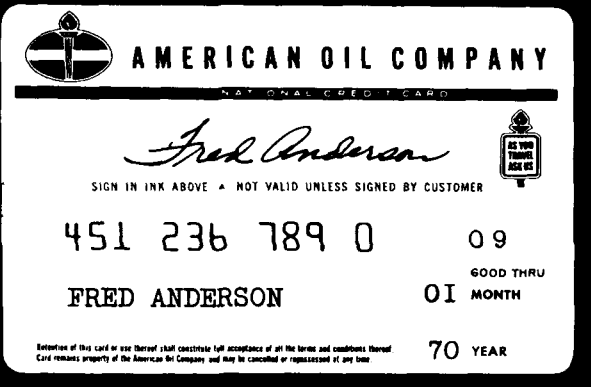

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Radical Agonies

Dennis H. Wrong

ANY THOUGHTFUL radical might at any time since the first decade of this century have chosen the melodramatic title Christopher Lasch has selected for his essays and reviews of the past two years on American radicalism past and present.* Discussions of the "decline" of populism, the "collapse" of socialism, the "isolation" of the intellectuals, the CIA's manipulation of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, and the revival of a black nationalism that is of doubtful relevance to the plight of the Negro in this country, document the failure of American radicals even to hold firm to a body of coherent doctrines and values, let alone to build a durable political movement. Lasch attributes this failure to the Left's paucity of adequate theory and its proneness to self-defeating habits and attitudes: vituperative factionalism, the sacrifice of larger goals to compromised short-run gains, the sell-outs of intellectuals moved by "elitist" concern for their own narrow interests as a professional class, oversusceptibility to foreign ideologies inapplicable to American experience, revolutionary romanticism mindlessly exalting violence, and attraction to the glamor of heroic action and the pathos of defeat as opposed to the prosiness of organization and disciplined thinking.

Presumably there are also objective circumstances accounting for the limited achievements of American movements of the Left—their failures are unlikely to have entirely resulted from the defects of mind and character of their supporters. But Lasch is less concerned with the history of radicalism as a subject of scholarly interest—most of these essays were originally published in the *New York Review of Books*—than with exhorting the New Left to avoid the shortcomings of its predecessors and chastising it where it has given signs of following, usually unknowingly, in their path. In the closing chapter, he presents his own prescriptions for a viable and durable American radicalism, and here, as well as in his penetrating discussion of black nationalism, he expresses his discouragement over the nihilism, violence-worship, contempt for civil liberties, and addiction to the new crude guerrilla Marxism of Third World revolutionaries, of both black militants and student radicals. Someone told me the other day that a Columbia SDS leader had recently laid down two new criteria for differentiating liberals from radicals: the liberal fears the reactionary backlash that might result from continuing confrontations and disruptions on the campuses, and he still regards the university as more enlightened than other institutions. Lasch flunks both these tests of radicalism. His disillusionment with the New Left has undoubtedly increased in the six months since he wrote the criticisms included in the present book.

THE NEED felt by spokesmen for new political or cultural movements to denounce their immediate predecessors even as they reenact their errors, is perhaps an inevitable response to the extraordinary discontinuities of contemporary history. As a would-be mentor to the New Left, Lasch runs true to form in his long account of the Congress for Cultural Freedom and its covert links with the CIA. Better-documented than other recent attacks on the "cold-war intellectuals" and free of any disposition to defend Communist versions of the cold war, this essay nevertheless has most of the characteristic faults of indictments of a past political tendency from the vantage point of retrospective knowledge of the more unsavory consequences to which it led.

I have, in fact, the almost surrealistic sense of having been disturbed in much the same way that Lasch's account now disturbs me by the very writers who are his targets here. Writing in 1955 and with Leslie Fiedler's political essays—cited by Lasch as a glaring example of cold-war chauvinism in the 50's—serving as one of his main exhibits, Harold Rosenberg asserted that "what is remarkable about the manufacture of myths in the 20th century is that it takes place under the noses of living witnesses of the actual events and, in fact, cannot dispense with their collaboration." Lasch is perhaps too young to qualify as a true "living witness," but what is one to make of Mary McCarthy who in the *New York Review of Books* (where else?) recently speculated that George Orwell, who died in early 1950, might have supported the Vietnam war had he lived "because of his belligerent anti-Communism, which there is no use trying to discount"? Now Miss McCarthy, whom today Lasch himself finds a bit *outré* for advising opponents of the war "to provoke intolerance," addressed public forums of the American branch of the Congress for Cultural Freedom and was a charter member of its organizational predecessor, Americans for Intellectual Freedom, created in 1949. Nor was her anti-Communism in those days noticeably less "belligerent" than George Orwell's. And why the invidious adjective, as if to suggest that Orwell favored preventive war? Moreover, are the anti-Communist convictions of a man who has been dead for twenty years to be "discounted" because they can retroactively be made to appear discreditable in light of Vietnam? This reasoning perfectly parallels that of Fiedler in his *An End to Innocence* essays.

PEERING INTO the latest wing added to this hall of distorting mir-

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rors, one is reluctantly moved to insist that the 50's, unpleasant as it is to have to bother with them again, cannot be written off as the Red, White, and Blue decade any more than the 30's were the Red decade they were cracked up to be back in the 50's. Lasch's view of the 50's reveals the same distortions and simplifications of previous efforts to look back in anger: earlier and later events are telescoped together ignoring their immediate political contexts, quite distinct groups are combined to make it appear they shared a single ideological tendency, no mention is made of the strong opposition at the time to the more extreme manifestations of the tendency under attack. On this last point: the American Committee for Cultural Freedom, at least in the official positions it took, was itself widely perceived as shrill and monomaniacal in its anti-Communism even in circles that were no less firmly anti-Communist and gave qualified support to American foreign policy in the early phases of the cold war. If I may cite myself as an example, I attended several public forums of the ACCF and one private meeting confined to members and their guests, but when invited to join the organization I declined out of disgust for the soft-pedaling of McCarthyism that Lasch reports and that I, along with others, attacked in print at the time. If the CIA financing of enterprises like the Congress and *Encounter* had been made public when it began (as, of course, it should have been), while efforts to justify the whole arrangement would certainly have been less apologetic, it would have created no less of a scandal in the intellectual community than it did two years ago when aired by people eager to discredit the immediate past.

Without making any excuses for them, Irving Howe has already described in COMMENTARY* the complex ideological history that led some Old Left intellectuals to become undiscriminating supporters of American cold-war policies, and a very few of them even to accept CIA funding in full knowledge of its source, so there is no need to go over that ground again. But there are a few items in Lasch's long indictment that cry out for correction in detail and hardly add to the luster of his credentials as a historian.

He begins with an account of the 1950 Berlin conference at which the Congress for Cultural Freedom was founded, complaining that the very choice of a meeting-place was a "symbol of the cold war." Of course it was: the Russian blockade of West Berlin had occurred less than two years before and the aim of the conference was to rally Western intellectuals to resist Soviet pressures in Europe in the aftermath of several earlier conferences of "peace-loving" intellectuals held under Communist auspices. These were also the years of the trials and executions of "Titoist" Communists in Eastern Europe and of Zhdanov's purges of artists and writers—many of them Jewish—in Russia itself. North Korea invaded South Korea on the second day of the Berlin meeting. The American delegation, the nucleus of the later ACCF, consisted of the leaders of Americans for Intellectual Freedom, an organization which had been created to expose the Moscow-sponsored international peace conference held the year before at the Waldorf.

Yet in his essay Lasch tells us nothing of this background to the Berlin meeting, a background that makes it clear that the Congress was created as a counter-move to Soviet thrusts on the political, military, and, most notably, the cultural fronts. Should those intellectuals who were veterans of the old anti-Stalinist campaigns long before there was a cold war have stayed home, turned their backs on international politics, settled for denouncing lynchings in the South? All of this occurred, of course, before the CIA entered the picture, although, as Lasch himself notes, the Congress modulated its singleminded anti-Communist line after the Berlin meeting and the ACCF, to which he next directs his fire, was never supported by CIA money and often opposed the "softer" line of its parent body.

Lasch pictures Arthur Koestler and the late Franz Borkenau as typifying the spirit of the Berlin conference, relying on a hostile British press report of a speech by Borkenau and a gross misreading of a published version of the speech. The only thing he apparently knows about Borkenau is that he was once a Communist, from which Lasch infers that Borkenau's statement that "totalitarianism grows dialectically out of liberalism" reveals "the amazing persistence and tenacity of the Bolshevik habit of mind" in continuing to show contempt for "bourgeois liberalism" and "liberal intellectualism." A reading of Borkenau's speech indicates that Lasch, incredibly, is ignorant of the fact that "liberalism" to Europeans means the doctrines of laissez-faire economics—in effect, 19th-century capitalism—as well as constitutional freedoms. Borkenau's point was the fairly elementary one that democratic socialism and both the Communist and Nazi versions of totalitarianism were different forms of revolt against the insecurities of an unregulated market economy.

ON THE strength of this misunderstanding, Lasch concludes that "the ideology of the anti-Communist Left tended to merge into fascism" and proclaims that Borkenau's "central European, quasi-totalitarian sensibility" stands fully revealed when he attacks "totalitarianism at length without referring, except in passing . . . to the Nazi regime." As if the very term "totalitarianism," however much it may since have been misused, had not come into general use in the 40's precisely to emphasize the similarities between Nazism and Stalinism! After this, the reader will surely be startled to find Lasch himself announcing in a later chapter that "as a social philosophy liberalism is dead; and it cannot survive even as a private morality unless it is integrated into a new moral and philosophical synthesis beyond liberalism." Although the liberalism Lasch thinks has expired is not 19th-century free-market capitalism but 20th-century welfare statism, his very words, let alone the idea, are al-

* "The New York Intellectuals: A Chronicle and a Critique," October 1968.

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most identical with those he finds so sinister when Franz Borkenau used them twenty years ago—which may suggest no more than that intellectuals ought to be more chary of proclaiming the death of such portentous abstractions as liberalism, socialism, ideology itself, or, for that matter, God. If Borkenau, Koestler, and others stand condemned of intellectual elitism, not to mention "quasi-totalitarian sensibilities," when they criticize liberalism, what are we to conclude when Lasch uses the New Left tag "corporate liberalism" to describe the contemporary American status quo he opposes?

LASCH singles out Borkenau in order to suggest that the European intellectuals associated with the Congress were mostly embittered ex-Communists or crypto-Nazis ("German nationalists," as he delicately puts it). Turning to the American scene, he accurately reports the anti-Communist sermonizing and the reluctance to define McCarthyism as a threat to cultural freedom of the Congress's American branch; however, it soon becomes apparent that he is after bigger and more contemporary game than the small group of New York intellectuals identified with the ACCF. Sidney Hook's views in the early 50's on the Smith Act and the rights of Communists to teach are certainly open to challenge—and were widely challenged at the time—but it is puzzling to find Lasch attacking Hook and the ACCF for maintaining that universities should be free to decide for themselves the issue of Communist teachers without interference from Congressional committees. Surely, even if this problem was a false or inflated one, their position favoring "self-determination for the academic community" does not differ from that of college administrators, faculties, and most student demonstrators today who insist they want no intervention by federal or state authorities in coping with student protests on the campus. Yet to Lasch the ACCF stand is simply further evidence of the intellectuals' inveterate "elitism" and "glorification of experts."

The point of this strained argument is to link the ACCF to Noam Chomsky's "New Mandarins"—the technocrats, policy scientists, and "social accountants" of the Pentagon and the RAND Corporation who have placed their claimed expertise directly at the disposal of the "war-making and propaganda machinery of the State." But, one is driven to insist, it is a long jump from the political and intellectual worlds of Sidney Hook and the *New Leader* to that of Herman Kahn and McNamara's "Whiz Kids," from, as Philip Rieff once put it, the Rand School to the RAND Corporation. The intellectuals of the ACCF were mostly literary men and journalists whose outlook had been shaped not by the academy but by the movements and conflicts on the Left in the 30's and 40's. By the 50's the main component of this outlook was a principled anti-Stalinism that had become for many a rigid and mechanically applied dogma.

The "New Mandarins," on the other hand, are academic men steeped in the apolitical scientism and technicism prevalent in much of American social science. The two groups are fundamentally dissimilar; the journals and associations, such as the ACCF, created by the former changed or vanished in less than a decade. The cold-war strategists and war-games theorists may indeed be moved by a longing "to be on the inside of things" and "to share the secrets ordinary people are not permitted to hear," or even by "despair of democracy," but this kind of elitism was alien to the intellectuals of the ACCF who, if anything, were only too ready to invoke the ignorant anti-Communism of the ordinary man to justify their own views. It is impossible to imagine such vociferous and argumentative people as Sidney Hook or Diana Trilling hankering for hush-hush jobs in the Pentagon, let alone being offered them. One expects a professional historian to make such distinctions even if he is writing about the very recent past and is animated by a worthy desire to chart new political directions for the democratic Left.

Lasch has learned all the lessons of his elders on the baneful influence of Stalinism on the American Left. His foreign-policy views, however, may be properly described as neo-isolationist, although he does not include in the present book an article he published last year in the New York *Times Magazine* praising the revisionist historians of the cold war, some of whom come close in their zeal to criticize the United States to denying or excusing post-war Soviet expansionism. Before the 1920's, isolationism was, of course, the traditional posture of the American Left, and for good reason. The immense prestige of the Russian Revolution among American radicals, two World Wars, the cold war, and the two Asian wars arising out of it have centralized power in the federal government, created a military-industrial complex, and weakened and divided the forces of the Left. There is something enormously appealing in Christopher Lasch's wish to have done with all this history that we did not want; in his description of Debs's pre-1914 Socialist party as the proper model for a new American socialist movement rather than the Wobblies championed by most groups of the New Left; in his hope for "a collective effort among critics and scholars to take up the great themes of the 19th-century where they were abandoned in the 20's and to use them as theoretical guides to the present situation."

LOOKING beyond the United States, I am moved to paraphrase a bit of Faulknerian rhetoric from *Intruder in the Dust*. Faulkner wrote that "for every Southern boy fourteen years old, not once but whenever he wants it, there is the instant when it's still not two o'clock on that July afternoon in 1863, the brigades are in position behind the rail fence . . . and Pickett himself [is] waiting . . . and it's all in the balance, it hasn't happened yet, it hasn't even begun yet. . . ." Every middle-aged socialist cherishes the far nobler vision that it's still that August morning in 1914 and the deputies of the great German Social Democratic party, the party of Marx and Engels, the leading party of

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the Socialist International, are filing into their seats in the Reichstag to vote on the Kaiser's request for war credits and "it's all in the balance, it hasn't happened yet, it hasn't even begun yet."

But this is the stuff of myth. If early in this century the socialist movement missed major historical opportunities and then was engulfed by events that were scarcely of its own making, we are nevertheless incapable of recreating it in a world and an America that are so fundamentally changed. Regretfully, therefore, I remain unpersuaded by Lasch's arguments for a new independent party of the Left dedicated to the values of "decentralization, local control, and a generally antibureaucratic outlook."

I HAVE the impression that, except for a brief hiatus in the 50's, I have been listening for almost as long as I can remember to debates on the Left over the advisability of starting a new party. But in the past the advocates of this course always argued from three major assumptions. First, that the unions and the working class would provide the major organizational and mass support for such a party. Second, that the Democratic party was hopelessly tied to its reactionary Southern wing. And third, that a major economic crisis would sooner or later radicalize large segments of the population which would rally to the new party. Today, however, these assumptions seem to have vanished. For example Lasch fails to mention labor at all, suggesting that the professions, sections of suburbia, the ghetto, and "above all" the university provide a sufficient initial base for a new party. Then, too, one of the most striking things about the New Left, which has rediscovered or revived so many of the old, half-forgotten ideas and slogans of past political protest in America, is the almost total absence in its rhetoric of apocalyptic forecasts of an inevitable depression arising out of the "contradictions of capitalism." Nor does the New Left appear to have noticed that the South has finally abandoned its lingering Democratic allegiance in Presidential elections and is beginning to do so at lower levels, and new national convention rules reduce the possibility of the boss-controlled state delegations that insured Humphrey's nomination in 1968. In political terms, then, this would seem to be the most inappropriate moment in years for liberals and radicals to cease working in the Democratic party and to attempt to launch a new socialist party, even if there were not considerable evidence that the Left surge of the 60's has spent much of its force and that we may soon find ourselves resuming once again a defensive posture in an effort to hold on to what has already been achieved.

But Lasch is hardly so naive as to expect quick political success for a new party. In fact, he occasionally seems to conceive of it chiefly as a kind of holding company for radicals who have so often dissipated their energies in single-issue third-party campaigns, or as a way of providing continuity in "the Movement" for student rebels after they have graduated and are forced to come to terms in their personal lives and careers with established institutions. Elsewhere, drawing heavily on T. B. Bottomore, whom he mistakenly identifies as a Canadian rather than an Englishman, Lasch stresses the role a radical party might play in giving political focus to the brand of American social criticism that from Veblen to Mills has so often been produced in isolation strongly marked by the authors' personal idiosyncrasies. Lasch seems to envisage a party that would function as a kind of Church for the Left, ecumenical in its breadth of outlook, welcoming radicals of many shades of opinion without degenerating into one of the purist sects that have been the sole survivors of past periods of protest.

Yet he does not eschew hopes of long-run political success. He argues that a new radical party should avoid defining itself simply as a protest movement or as a "ginger group" to the major parties in the traditional pattern of American third parties. The trouble with this is that past movements of the Left (and, for that matter, of the Right) did not start with such limited objectives either: the conclusion that their main achievement was to influence some major party programs was reached by historians *after* their decline, and Lasch fails to convince that a new party today could avoid this fate merely by being forewarned of its possibility. If, on the other hand, a socialist party were to succeed, as Lasch hopes, in eventually forging a new electoral majority, one wonders how it would maintain its militance and avoid "capitulationism"—the epithet with which Lasch contemptuously dismisses British Labour and all of the European Social Democratic parties. Moreover, what grounds are there for thinking that the American Socialist party would have followed a different course had it avoided being torn apart by the crises of the First World War and the Bolshevik Revolution? What, for instance, would have been its "decentralist" response to the Depression, since Lasch identifies "socialism" so integrally with decentralization and local autonomy? But the Depression, the New Deal, and the rise of organized labor are, along with American involvement in world politics, part of the tainted history of the past half-century that Lasch hopes to overcome.

LASCH CONCLUDES that "the experience of the New Left already refutes one of its principal tenets, that a revolutionary movement has no need of theory because theory will spring spontaneously out of the daily struggles of the movement." In a spirit utterly alien to the anti-intellectualism and irrationalism of sections of the New Left, he eloquently affirms the importance of theory, of a social criticism and a political ideology informed by the best of modern historical and social-science scholarship, as well as of a scholarship guided by concern for equality, freedom, and justice. Since he argues persuasively that neither the New Left nor the black nationalists have yet developed such a theory and that contemporary scholarship is sadly deficient in such a concern, his summons to create a new party *now* seems rather premature.

The New Left is part of a much larger, even worldwide, movement

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against rigid centralized bureaucratic organization. Weber rather than Marx often appears to be the prophet of the past who has most fully drawn the face of the contemporary enemy. In insisting that decentralization and the infusion of democracy into bureaucratic institutions must be "the heart of radicalism," Lasch correctly recognizes that the revolt against bureaucracy is no more likely to prove ephemeral than has the revolt against the poverty and inequality of capitalism, even reformed capitalism. But he minimizes the extent to which it represents a new direction for the Left rather than the revival of an old tradition cleansed of the corrupting influence of the recent past. It is, after all, the Right rather than the Left that for some time has used "bureaucracy" as an epithet and affirmed local control and grass-roots autonomy as countermeasures. Max Weber even described himself as a "class-conscious bourgeois." To link such values to socialism, one has to hark back not merely to 1910 but to the pre-Marxist Utopian socialism of the first half of the 19th century. Lasch, in effect, here writes off most of the Marxist tradition, trade unionism, the welfare state, and mass political parties along with the warfare state and the American imperium.

But "creating autonomous enclaves of socialism in the ghettos," for example, will hardly eliminate their poverty or, however great the sense of "participation" it might create, satisfy the aspirations of their inhabitants for the materially more comfortable life made possible by modern technology. An urban ghetto is not, after all, comparable with an agrarian commune—a Brook Farm, an Oneida Community, or even an Israeli kibbutz. Lasch himself recognizes this in his powerful analysis of the contradictions in black nationalism. "Would self-determination for the ghetto threaten General Motors?" he asks, and replies in the negative. In short, Lasch's notion that a new radical party could create at the community level a "socialist alternative" that would "show both by teaching and by its own example that life under socialism would be preferable to life under corporate capitalism" is subject to most of the objections he himself raises in his critique of Black Power, particularly if we remember that the communities in question will also for the most part be *black* communities, asserting the newly-won ethnic solidarity of a minority group. Lasch's programmatic statements on the composition and aims of a new socialist party are, unfortunately, as vague and full of wishful rhetoric as the black nationalist and New Left revolutionary manifestoes he takes such pains to examine and refute.

If Lasch's hopes for a new radical movement are even on his own evidence much too optimistic, it is still the case that the New Left and the student movement represent only the most visible and directly political manifestation of a far broader opposition throughout the Western world to antiquarian and rigid institutions, ranging from the revolt inside the Catholic Church to the reform of legal and penal codes dating back to the 18th century. Benchmarks for future efforts have been set even if we are in for a turn to the Right after the ferment of the past decade. Sad wisdom and small consolation, perhaps, but that is the way the world usually moves. In this sense the agony of the American Left is the agony of all Lefts, destined always to fall short of goals that then have to be redefined and respecified when they once again come to seem attainable.

Way Past the Hudson

John Thompson

Ten years ago, when everything was different, the novel *Mrs. Bridge* by Evan S. Connell, Jr. attracted attention as one of those few American books which succeed in telling us something about that mysterious realm, the American Middlewest of the middle classes. Even then, it was the Middlewest of twenty years before, but presumably the book spoke to, and spoke for, the generation that had been the right age for the Second World War, and to us, then, in 1959, those days before hadn't yet become remote. The things we had grown up believing we still believed then; those articles of faith that distinguished us from our parents (and bound us to them for definition) hadn't yet been stranded on the shores of history.

In *Mrs. Bridge* Connell named the artifacts of that place and that time, spoke its dialect, rehearsed its folkways, all with the inseparable mixture of love and horror we must each of us have had for our parents and for our own childhood. Its form was ingenious. A major part of the success of the book was that Connell had found a solution to the problem of making a whole book out of lives whose only story, whose entire theme and plot and texture, is simply that they have no story. At their moments of deepest insight, his people feel a vague wordless wondering, a kind of yearning, an empty, unspoken, unspeakable question about whether or not it has really been satisfactory that nothing has ever happened to them. Yet this life without event or danger, adventure or challenge, without even discomfort, is precisely its own goal and purpose, and the goal and purpose of all visible parts of this society. The dear mindless mother lonely in her too-comfortable doll-house had certainly not gone unrecorded. She is the heroine, for instance, of at least a dozen stories by Peter Taylor, beginning in 1939, and his heroine under the various names he has given her might, with a certain descent in social status, a small increase in her myopia, slip into Mrs. Bridge's place and find it her own. There would be one more difference she might notice: the terrible and imperceptible transfixion by a tireless filial eye, day and night, she might find, had undergone some change in focus. The relentless apprehension would become in Connell's Kansas City a few watts less piercing, as

John Thompson's *"Notes on Aggression"* appeared in our April issue.

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it were, and yet curiously more obtrusive and distorting. (Sometimes I think that the famous Hawthorne effect, in which the mere fact of being observed alters behavior, works in literature too: parents

diffident about summary, neither in narrative exposition nor in character analysis. By Chapter Three, "Preliminary Training," Mrs. Bridge is married and has her three children, and we are told

Mrs. Bridge, in Chapter 117, "Hello?," gets herself stuck in the garage in the Lincoln one very cold day, and we leave her there, to die, presumably, calling "Hello? Hello out there?"

Mr. Connell's method is so sus

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of his children and then as soon as they are old enough commands their rejection of him and all he stands for. He can't abide the classical music Ruth plays for him, "strange music," and male ballet dancers trouble him, "Coppélia." He keeps Negroes firmly in their places at every opportunity, and does not smile at bawdy stories. He loves the voices of Nelson Eddy and Jeannette MacDonald on the Telephone Hour, and hates FDR. He may be indeed, as the jacket claims, "the archetypal white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, middle-class, 'right-thinking' pillar of society." He belongs to the country club.

The novel *Mr. Bridge* is in all details as witty and knowing and skillful as *Mrs. Bridge*, and yet, of this pair, husband seems to me less convincing than wife. He meant a lot in his silent absence, in the book named for his wife, with his few abrupt admonitions to the children—"Think!"—or, coming home at some moment of his wife's most crucial and inarticulate need, as she rushes to him, he remarks wearily, "I see you forgot to have the car lubricated."

He means less in the revelation of his own heartfelt and tongue-tied yearnings that match but never meet hers. She may be an archetype—not typical but beyond the typical, that really rather rare person who actually believes and feels those diluted injunctions of Puritanism that nice people in her day pretended to live by. The protection from experience that this society provided women—that it forced upon them—was indeed effective, and it is within the knowledge of anyone who has lived in it to avow the reality of Mrs. Bridge's superhuman innocence, the superhuman limitations forced upon her. It is within this knowledge, too, to recognize women like Mrs. Bridge's friend Grace Barron, who sought more than this, who went to concerts and read books, and to acknowledge that such a woman could be driven to suicide by her deprivations. When Mr. Bridge was only a stern and mysterious figure rarely at home, his adherence to the copybook maxims of small-town America was plausible too: these were the correct things to tell children. But downtown, as a highly successful lawyer, his iron-clad innocence is simply not plausible, and he becomes more caricature than archetype. He would be not a pillar of society but an odd-ball in that world, and the other men would not trust him.

True, this was a long time ago, but I do not believe there ever was a time quite so remote as Mr. Bridge's. This is strange because the author obviously admires Mr. Bridge very much. It is as though he had known Mr. Bridge only when he and Mr. Bridge were so far apart in age that there could be no real communication between them; and then, later, he was unable to believe that Mr. Bridge was, after all, a man much like himself. Fathers are hard cases for us Americans!

And so, either or both of Mr. Connell's pair of books will bring at least many pleased recognitions to old Middlewesterners and many true points of information to strangers in time or in geography—and there is perhaps something remaining to say about the generations here presented and their ways of judging one another. The basic judgment, of course, is made by the generation born in the 1920's, and they judge the generation born in the last tail-end of the 19th century. The judgment is that they have no feelings. They are afraid of their own bodies and of other people's, they are afraid of their affections.

The terms of the judgment, though, are those of cultural values that are quite as transient and as derived and as local at the time of pronouncement as those terms professed and even believed by Mrs. Bridge. She and her husband are condemned for their musical tastes, their snobbery toward Negroes and Jews and workingmen, their failure to read poetry and enjoy ballet and "modern" art, their ignorance of French.

What has happened is something like this. Those born in that tail-end of the 19th century often enough were born into real hard-bitten violent pioneering families; their fathers and mothers may well have quarreled with Indians for the acres of sod they broke. They did not spare the rod, and both boys and girls were primarily hands for field and house. These children, when they grew up and had children of their own, tended to spoil them; there were no beatings, no hard tasks, no deprivations, only the constant recommendation of nice manners, pleasant dispositions, and cleanliness. And of course with their inhibition of the physical violence they themselves had seen and suffered, there must have been likewise an inhibition of physical love. (Who knows what they saw at night, in the wagons, the cabins, the sod huts?)

The children of the 1920's found this a code barren and embarrassingly unreal. A new kind of outlet for feelings was sweeping the country some fifty years or more after its origin in Europe, and since of course parents disapproved of it, this new art and new intellectualism provided a means of escape for the young, a means of judging the parents and of finding them wanting.

Those who as teen-agers in the 1930's and 1940's so judged their parents then are now parents of another grown generation (it really does seem as if people are born only in huge litters every twenty or twenty-five years) and I am sorry, but it was toward this most burning and tiresome question of our own day that I was wandering all the time. What do Mrs. Bridge's grandchildren, now in college, think of her children? What now of ballet, integration, Picasso, psychiatry, and sports cars? What of the Ivy League look, literary quarterlies, what of French wines? What of shallots?

A Season in the Stands

William Phillips

Football is not only the most popular sport. it is the most intellectual one. It is in fact, the intellectuals' secret vice. Not politics, not sex, not pornography, but foot-

William Phillips, *co-founder and chairman of the editorial board of* Partisan Review, *is the author of* A Sense of the Present.

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ball, and not college football but the real thing, pro ball, is the opium of the intellectuals. Few intellectuals have written about it, and this is because vices and addictions are difficult to write about, particularly when there is no literary tradition for doing so. To write about the kind of perversity that is regarded as normal by most people requires the confessional ingenuousness of Rousseau, or the all-consuming vanity of a de Sade, who ground all his experience into his obsessions, or some 19th-century pornographer who wrote about his vices in the form of an anonymous boast.

The few writers who have written at all about sports have been popular writers and they have usually created, like Ring Lardner, just a more stylized kind of journalism. Most recently the only sophisticated writer able to write about football has been George Plimpton, and he has done this by living out, as it were, his story. Nevertheless, what strikes one most about *Paper Lion* is the general tone of awe and hero-worship, as though Plimpton were indulging in a secret childhood he could not suppress.

So when I decided to write about my secret passion, the New York Giants, I had that uneasy feeling that comes from trying to act normally in an abnormal situation, like watching a pornographic movie for the first time. Unless we are faced with a new experience for which there is no readymade form, we tend to forget how much the act of writing depends on the styles and forms we make our own but which are originally handed down to us. This is why, for example, most students reproduce at best the latest platitudes when they are asked to write about their "experience." Only in undergraduate courses in *exposition* is writing taught as the description of some happening that is interesting or important, instead of the imposition of one's style on a subject, in a medium. Norman Mailer's accounts of political or sports events, for example, are really Mailer's way of surrounding a subject, the way an amoeba surrounds what it eats.

Most sportswriting has its own style and its own conventions, but it is rarely a sophisticated style, and its conventions come mostly from a blend of ordinary sports-talk and the newspaper feature story. This is why, I suppose, most sportswriting is full of jazzed-up commonplaces made to look like inside stuff. The style is usually a kind of quickie journalism, a strange mixture of "expertise," locker-room gossip, and "human interest," a running put-on of itself. And worst of all, the endless flow of copy manages to give very little real information. Reversing the formula of high-class journalism, which hides its emptiness behind skilled prose, sportswriting substitutes snappy clichés for fact and original observation. One of the best of recent football books, *Seven Days to Sunday*, a blow-by-blow account of a week with the Giants, is full of images like that of Homer Jones "driving . . . as though his body were made of frozen steel" and generalizations like "To perform the impossible, that is the stuff of heroes. To possess an awesome talent that defies definition and leaves one staggered to see it."

It is not just a question of writing. In general, the trouble is that football seduces us by appealing to feelings that the modern intellectual has learned to scorn—and which much of the nation is now beginning to question. On the surface, the football boom is, of course, a product of TV and shrewd promotion. But much of its popularity is due to the fact that it makes respectable the most primitive feelings about violence, patriotism, manhood. The similarity to war is unmistakable: each game is a battle with its own game-plan, each season a campaign, the whole thing a series of wars. Football strategy is like military strategy; the different positions, each with its own functions but coordinated with the rest of the team, are like the various branches of the armed services. There is even a general draft. And one is loyal to one's country—according to geography and the accident of birth. There is also a parallel to Vietnam, in the support of teams in foreign cities by local fans, which is considered as a hang-up, if not as treason. For intellectuals, particularly—but also for a growing number of people generally—these are feelings they would ordinarily be ashamed of; so pro ball legitimizes their untamed feelings the way *Evergreen* accommodates voyeurs. All sports serve as some kind of release but the rhythm of football is geared particularly to the violence and the peculiar combination of order and disorder of modern life. Baseball is too slow, too dependable, too much like a regional drawl. Basketball is too nervous and too tight; hockey too frenzied; boxing too chaotic, too folksy. Only football provides a genuine catharsis.

* * *

So I WENT Sunday after Sunday for my periodic emotional depletion at Yankee Stadium. But watching the Giants also provides certain fringe frustrations. The game has been streamlined but the facilities are underdeveloped. The VIP pressbox though unheated is at least glass-enclosed and centered on the fifty-yard line. But a reporter from COMMENTARY sits in the open near the goal posts, overdressed but chilled, constantly trying to decide whether he can see better with or without field glasses. The glasses give a close-up of a small field of action, like some of the line play, but as in television shots you lose the action as soon as the ball is snapped, and your eyes scurry frantically all over the field to keep up with the play. (If we can send back pictures of the moon, why can't we have television cameras and field glasses that take in the whole scene the way the eye does?)

Even more frustrating, however, is watching the sloppy, unpredictable, soft play of a team that has been permitted to run down. Like the nation as a whole, the Giants give the impression that while everything is there, something is missing. Occasionally, of course, and sometimes for a good part of a whole game, which is when they usually won, the team was high and strong. But on analysis this was usually due to some of the men lifting their game to compensate for the let-down of the rest of the team—or perhaps the lethargy

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of the other team served to inspire the Giants. And sometimes it was just Fran Tarkenton's one-man show that made up for the breakdown of the offense or the defense, which took turns in collapsing. Watching the Giants was like what I imagine many Frenchmen felt every time they had to fight the up-to-date German army.

The state of the Giants is very much like that of America as a whole: full of past accomplishments but unable to cope with modern problems. Also, too much affluence at the top. I suspect the Giants have been permitted to run down because they can fill Yankee Stadium week after week with almost any kind of team. Hence the Maras, who own the club, didn't spend enough money on players or build up a modern scouting apparatus to compete with the other ambitious, hungry, and efficient teams, like the Packers or the Cowboys or the Jets or the Colts; and they didn't bother to compete with the new League when it was lavishly and ruthlessly building up its war-plans. The story is a familiar one. Year after year the Giants waste most of their draft choices, and don't pick up enough gifted free agents. Hence they do not have enough overall talent; and they rarely get any superstars who can hop-up the rest of the team or break open a game. Occasionally they draft someone like Tucker Frederickson or Ernie Koy, who would be good enough if some of the other men were first-rate, or Willie Young, who is strong but not overpowering enough to solidify the left side of the offensive line. (Besides, I imagine he would make a better guard than a tackle, especially because he is quite fast for his size, if the Giants' other tackles were good enough to release him for guard.) Also, a smart trade was made when Lurtsema was picked up from the Colts, but again he is not as overwhelming as Olsen or Lilly or even Page, or some of the other top defensive linemen.

As one looks over the roster of the Giants, one gets the feeling that the team has been put together by some kind of managerial and coaching ingenuity—the way little magazines manage without enough money. And the sportswriters who might have served the function at least of prodding the Giants' management into keeping up with the development of the game have been either too timid or too lazy ever to write concretely about what's wrong with the Giants as a whole. For example, the weakest spots for the last few seasons have been the ends, yet there have rarely been more than a few hints about this in the sports pages of the *Times*, the *Post*, or the *News*. Only when the Giants made two ends, Dryer and Vanoy, their first two choices in the last draft, did the sportswriters let on that the ends were porous. (And now the loss of Vanoy to Canada indicates the same old sloppy pre-draft intelligence.) It is hard to tell whether the sportswriters' retroactive wisdom is the result of ignorance or caution.

The rest of the team has the same kind of uneven, middling talent, just enough for a fairly good game most of the time, a brilliant one on occasion, especially when the opposing team breaks down, and a sloppy one often enough to keep the team on an even keel of mediocrity. To get back to the ends, Katkavage is too slow, too small, too old, too dependent on age and savvy—indispensable to an outfit that has to live on its memories. Anderson, like so many of the other men, almost has it: he is just not quite quick enough or massive enough or smart enough. Hence he sometimes gets around or over his blocker spectacularly and then on the next play gets sucked in or knocked down easily, particularly when he is hit low. Willie Young, as I suggested, might be devastating if he were four or five inches taller; as it is, he is able to take out all but the very rangy, fast and strong ends. Because his center of gravity is low he usually is better on a rush than on pass-blocking. In a way, Young is a symbol of the Giants' fate: drafted as a chance find, he turned out better than expected, and the sight of him bulling and outstepping an end like a pudgy ballet dancer is both reassuring and disappointing. Wright is steady and uninspired, the kind of tackle who keeps the team from doing either too well or too badly. The guards are weak. Case is competent—some say underrated—but not too big; Dess highlights the generation gap on the team, and the other guards are undistinguished, picked up at the bargain counter. To complete the offensive unit, the tight ends are quite ordinary; Crespino is above average but not fast enough, nor is he a first-rate blocker or pass-receiver; Wilson made the trade for him look good only in the collapse of Morrall in the Superbowl game. Of the other ends, Homer Jones of course is a stand-out. The rest are either fading or not blooming, though Thomas can be flashy at times. Larsen is steady, though declining; and it is time to develop a replacement, but Chuck Hinton's performance so far has tended to be self-effacing. One might note that almost all the men fall somewhere between outstanding speed and outstanding power, which might be the definition of the average, competent, unspectacular player. (And in the offensive backfield the Giants also could use at least one spectacular back to return kicks and kick-offs of the kind so many other teams in both leagues seem able to acquire.)

Of the defensive tackles, Lurtsema is the best. The others are always on the brink of coming through; and it is hard to tell whether the chaotic development of the team has not permitted them to grow up. Silas never came on strong, after being traded. And so on. The linebackers show flashes of talent—Crutcher is tough and Avery determined—but they are small and undependable, and Davis plays like someone from whom you expect everything in the future, very little right now. Possibly the best unit is the defensive backfield, though it needs one more good back-up man.

* * *

If I sound like the frustrated manager inside every fan, satisfied with nothing but a winner, magnifying the team's failures, dreaming of sensational trades all winter long, it is because it is hard to invest your competitive feelings in a team that's a success when it

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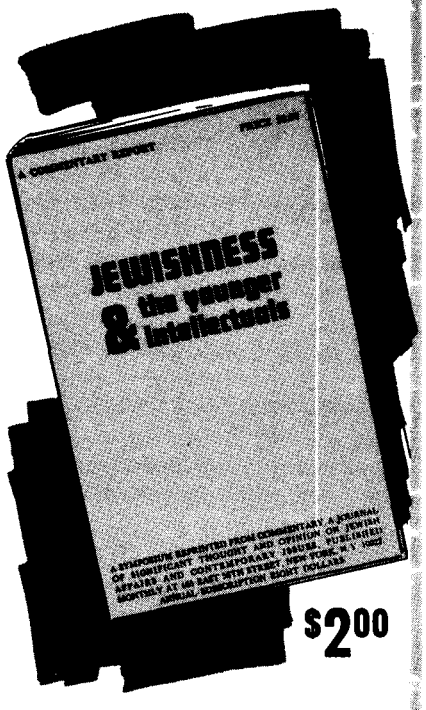

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wins more than it loses. Imagine living in a country that insists on fighting every week but doesn't know whether it will win or lose. This is what it must be like, I suppose, to be an Egyptian or Jordanian. But the Giants are all I have, so there I sat in the stands at the weekly lose-in, nursing my anxieties and discomforts, hoping this time the defense wouldn't fall apart, and the offense would coordinate sufficiently for a few sustained drives and few long gains, enough to win if only by a single point.

My morale was, however, propped up slightly by the spectacle of Allie Sherman after losing a game suffering even more than I did. A couple of times at the press conferences after the game in the locker room, I was shocked to see the fallen coach slumped like a man who thought he had nothing to live for. He was white, could barely talk, his eyes were lifeless and unfocused, and I felt the only thing that kept him from breaking down was his impatience with the foolish questions of the reporters. I had always suspected that only the professionals knew what was going on on the field, but the innocence of the reporters in the locker room left no doubt about their permanent amateur status. For example, in answer to an uninformed question about an uncompleted pass, Sherman whispered matter-of-factly it was simply a busted play. None of the other questions was either probing or embarrassing. I remember a game the Giants lost mainly because they could not keep out one of the opposing defending ends, yet none of the sportswriters was ungracious enough to bring this up. Nor was there any reference to this fact in all the expert accounts and rehashes the whole next week of what "really happened" on the field. Even the Superbowl, which one would expect to be reported more exactly, was covered sloppily. One of the main reasons the Colts couldn't get an offense going was that Sam Ball couldn't hold Gerry Philbin; yet the sportswriters managed at great length to keep this pertinent piece of information secret. Another cause of the Colts' breakdown was the depressed play of Earl Morrall, an uninspired quarterback, whom the sportswriters kept overpraising all season. Why? The only reason I can think of is that like most experts, they ride the going trends. Their own contribution is to embellish the official, public-relations version of what is happening at any given time. If the Colts are winning, then Morrall is a strategist, a leader, a "pinpoint passer"; as soon as the Colts lose, the sportswriters forget about him and start rehabilitating Unitas.

In the locker-room sessions, I was too timid to ask questions of any of the players, particularly since I was not equipped with pencil and pad and felt sure I did not look like a reporter. The questions asked by the "other" reporters had a professional air but they never got to the performance of the individual players or the team as a whole on any given play or sequence of plays. What they were after, it soon became clear, was the kind of answer that could provide newspaper copy: like Tarkenton saying—half in earnest, half with standard athlete's gallantry—he should have been sharper, or on a play that didn't work that he had to take the chance, and all the blame. In fact, once when Norman Podhoretz came to the game and down to the locker room with me, we both noted that the players made up a separate world which the bustling reporters pretended to be a part of, like old liberals at a youth conference. The players were quiet, remote, businesslike, unromantic. It was the reporters who because they had to write a dramatic story made a romance of the game. The players had simply done a day's work. Both Norman and I also noticed that the Giants were not oversized or particularly muscular, though some were tall and others chunky; they did not look as though they were made for the kind of mythic battles one reads about in sports prose.

* * *

BUT FOR A true fan the only question is the future of the team. What are the prospects of the Giants? So far as I can make out—and here I must plead my own

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amateurism—Sherman is a smart and resourceful coach, if not, like Lombardi or Landry, a great team organizer. But it is hard to tell where exactly the blame lies for the lack of better material, since the problem these days seems to be not so much a matter of grabbing a few stars as of building a football machine constantly feeding potential stars into every position. It's an industry run just inefficiently enough to provide some fun—not altogether unlike the publishing business.

In the meantime, there is nothing wrong with the Giants that probably couldn't be cured by a few defensive ends, a big, fast back, another defensive tackle, a couple of guards—to begin modestly. How hard is this to do? I don't know.

The collapse of the Giants does seem to typify the breakdown of New York City as a whole, the way a failing army signals the decline of a state. But if the fate of the city might be out of control, still it might be possible to revive the Giants. Nor, given the unevenness of history, is there any reason why even a dying city should not for a time have a live football team. Of course, there are the unmentionable Jets, but they are late-comers, with the improvised spirit of a pick-up team, and their new breed of fans is like a ragged army of internal refugees, whose attachments and loyalties and enthusiasms are neither stable nor predictable. The myth of the Giants is identified with the myth of New York, and only the Giants can supply that element of tradition and allegiance and security that is disappearing from every aspect of American life except sports. Only the Giants can arrest the galloping alienation of the intellectuals. And if, as in the reversals of sex, the vices of the intellectuals are the virtues of other people, this is just another example of the contradiction lying at the heart of all popular culture.

So what have I to look forward to but another cold season in the stands, with my ragged Giants, wrapped up in the illusion that my own life and that of my city has something to do with whether the Giants win or lose.

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A Question of Conscience

KURT GERSTEIN: THE AMBIGUITY OF GOOD. By SAUL FRIEDLANDER. *Knopf. 228 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by GUENTER LEWY

THE STORY of Kurt Gerstein involves one of the most bizarre episodes of the Nazi era, a period of human history not lacking in the fantastic. Gerstein was an SS *Obersturmführer,* in charge of supplying the deadly Zyklon B gas to Hitler's murder factories. At the same time, he was a member of the Confessing Church, an opponent of Nazism, and a man who repeatedly risked his life in attempts to alert the Western world and the Vatican to what was happening in the Nazi death camps. At the end of the war Gerstein surrendered to the French; then, in July 1945, he was found dead in a prison cell in Paris, an apparent case of suicide.

This, in very broad outline, is the story of Kurt Gerstein, a story that was popularized and brought to the attention of a wide audience by Rolph Hochhuth's play *The Deputy,* of which Gerstein is one of the heroes. As is so often the case, however, reality is more intricate than a playwright's interpretation. Saul Friedländer, a professor of contemporary history at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, and best known for his work of documentation, *Pius XII and the Third Reich,* through painstaking research has been able to reconstruct the actual drama of Kurt Gerstein. Beyond telling the life story of one rather unique man, Friedländer attempts to come to grips with the moral dilemmas of an entire society. As I shall try to show later, the ramifications of these dilemmas reach into our own lives today.

The early years of Kurt Gerstein do not reveal any very unusual traits: Friedländer calls him "a German like so many others." Born at Münster in 1905, he grew up in a Protestant Prussian middle-class family; his father was an ardent nationalist and later a convinced Nazi. Young Gerstein, too, shared the intense nationalism of so many members of his generation; as a student at the University of Marburg he joined one of the most chauvinistic fraternities in Germany. But he was also a deeply religious person, preoccupied with feelings of guilt and a longing for purity. He became actively involved in the Evangelical Youth Movement, and when the Nazis, in late 1933, insisted on merging this organization into the Hitler Youth, Gerstein protested. Not that he was opposed to Hitler's political aims—Gerstein had joined the Nazi party in May 1933, and for a long time he continued to insist on his loyalty to the Führer. However, he was seriously disturbed by the Nazis' neo-paganism, and he felt duty bound to insist that a nation without God was "a dangerous thing."

During the following years, Gerstein wrote and distributed pamphlets setting forth this view. He was twice arrested and in October 1936 he was expelled from the Nazi party. In a letter which he wrote in 1938 and which he mailed to his uncle in America, he spoke of tragedies arising "from loss of intellectual freedom, religious freedom, and justice." But after the outbreak of the war and Hitler's impressive early victories, Gerstein's attitude to the Nazi regime changed again. He agreed to write for the Hitler Youth and in August 1940 he sought reinstatement in the party. A few months later, or perhaps even earlier, he applied for service in the Waffen-SS and in March 1941 he joined the military branch of the Nazi elite guard.

THE MOTIVES for this decision are not altogether clear. At war's end Gerstein said that he had wanted to find out for himself about the Nazis' compulsory euthanasia program for the insane and mentally retarded (his sister-in-law had been one of its victims). Then, after seeing clearly into this dreadful mechanism, he wanted to "cry it aloud to the whole nation." But Friendländer thinks that Gerstein's motives were more complex. There is evidence that Gerstein talked about joining the Waffen-SS as early as the end of 1939, well before the first rumors about the killing of the feeble-minded had begun to circulate. Furthermore, the question of ho wa person twice arrested by the Gestapo could be accepted into the Waffen-SS—at that time still an elite force—remains an enigma.

After basic military training, Gerstein, on account of his technical proficiency, was assigned to the office of the Hygienic Chief of the Waffen-SS. Here he distinguished himself in constructing disinfection and water-purifying equipment, and in January 1942 became head of disinfection services, with the rank of *Obersturmführer.* It was this office that soon thereafter was given charge of supplying the lethal gas for the death camps, and in August 1942 Gerstein personally witnessed mass gassings at Belzec and Treblinka. The experience proved so shattering that from that time on, and in a perfectly reckless manner, he began to reveal the details of the machinery of the Final Solution to a large number of influential people. Contrary to the dramatic account in *The Deputy,* he failed to gain admittance to the Papal nuncio in Berlin, but he did succeed in telling his horrifying tale to several neutral diplomats, German churchmen, and many others.

To Gerstein's utter dismay and distress, nothing happened as the result of his revelations that mass murder was being committed on an unprecedented scale. The Pope and the German churchmen maintained a discreet silence; the Western Allies, while denouncing the crimes, rejected proposals to bomb the gas chambers or the transpor-

GUENTER LEWY, *who teaches government at the University of Massachusetts, is the author of* The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany.

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tation system leading to the death camps. The machinery of destruction continued to function smoothly—with the increasingly distraught Gerstein as the chief purchasing agent of the deadly Zyklon B gas. Here begins the element of high tragedy. After the war Gerstein asserted that he had been able to divert and destroy several shipments of gas, but a German Denazification Court in 1950, while accepting the truth of this assertion—for which substantiating testimony is available—nevertheless refused to exonerate Gerstein: "After his experiences in the Belzec camp, he might have been expected to resist, with all the strength at his command, being made the tool of an organized mass murder." This he did not do. In fact, he became a cog in the machinery of the Final Solution. Despite the fact that Gerstein had destroyed trifling quantities of the gas supplied by him, said the court, and had made courageous attempts to inform the world of the murder of the Jews, he could not be freed of a share of responsibility for the crimes which his actions had facilitated.

In January 1965, Gerstein was rehabilitated in West Germany. Kurt Kiesinger, then prime minister of Baden-Würtemberg, based his decision on the fact that "Gerstein resisted National Socialist despotism with all his strength and suffered consequent disadvantage." Friedländer welcomes this rehabilitation, but finds that the reasons given do not sufficiently come to grips with the earlier condemnation. He argues that unlike most "good" Germans who remained quiet while millions of Jews died, Gerstein accommodated himself to the crime in order to resist it—risking his life in the process. Under a totalitarian regime resistance can be carried out only from within the system. The resister, therefore, often seems indistinguishable from the executioner. Had there been in Germany thousands or even hundreds of Gersteins to divert shipments of gas or cause files to go astray or instigate delays in the construction of the gas chambers or even to warn Jews, then hundreds of thousands of victims would have been saved by these "accomplices" of the regime. Much of Gerstein's tragedy, Friedländer concludes, lay in the loneliness of his action: "his appeals having brought no response and his dedication having proved a solitary commitment, his sacrifice appeared 'useless' and became 'guilt.'"

Friedländer's reasoning is unexceptionable but it does not fully clarify the moral issue posed by the so-called "inner emigration" of officials who stayed at their jobs in order to ameliorate the disastrous results of the system they continued to serve. How does one balance the good such men did against the horrible crimes which resulted from the continued fulfillment of their official duties? Is it not true that the machinery of extermination was able to grind away mercilessly precisely because the Globkes, Weizsäckers, and Gersteins remained at their posts, all the while consoling themselves that their inner opposition plus an occasional act of necessarily minor sabotage left them with clean hands?

If the answers to such questions are difficult to find, it is equally hard to draw the proper lessons to be learned from these tragic events—a task not undertaken by Friedländer but relevant to the moral vocabulary of our time. In a letter written in March 1944, the elder Gerstein reassured his son Kurt on the subject of the latter's guilt feelings: "The person who bears the responsibility is the man who gives the orders, not the one who carries them out. There can be no question of disobedience. You must do what you are ordered to do. As an old official and a former Prussian officer, that is the way I learned things." When the orders in question involve deeds that outrage all accepted canons of morality, it is not difficult to reject this kind of insistence on unquestioning obedience; thus, the Nuremberg courts repudiated the plea of obedience to superior orders by declaring that "individuals have international duties which transcend the national obligations of obedience imposed by the individual State." But the problem becomes more complicated when the immorality or injustice of the actions one is ordered to perform is less clear.

Ever since the revelation of the hideous crimes committed by the Nazis—crimes whose perpetrators often defended themselves by pleading that they were merely following orders—it has become fashionable to celebrate the primacy of the individual's conscience over the commands of the state. Now, the tradition of subjecting legality to the scrutiny and judgment of morality is an old and honorable one, and in some cases disobedience to law can clearly become a moral duty. But are we today perhaps in danger of going to the opposite extreme from that of the Nazi officials who faithfully carried out Hitler's monstrous orders? Is the only lesson to be learned from the Nazi experience that we should distrust all legality, presume it to be in the wrong unless proved otherwise, and follow the commands of our private judgments without regard to the social consequences of our actions?

Unthinking obedience to law just because it is law can lead to gross immorality, but absolute reliance on conscience rather than on law can bring about an equally undesirable state of affairs. In such a situation, the racist, following his conscience, will push around the defender of minority causes, militant Rightists will break up meetings of their opponents on the Left with the justification that they are following the dictates of their own moral convictions. In short, the absolute reliance on conscience leads to an absolute reliance on raw force, with the outcome of disagreements determined by the criterion of strength and ruthlessness. One need hardly add that a Hitler or a Himmler would undoubtedly pass with flying colors the test of strong personal convictions and sincerity.

In this country, the conflict between legality and morality was revived in the days of Martin Luther King's nonviolent civil-rights movement and lives on in the crisis of confidence in democratic government engendered by the war in Vietnam. But uncritical praise of civil disobedience and resistance to a law branded as unjust or immoral has by now itself become an important factor in the spread of hate and violence, and

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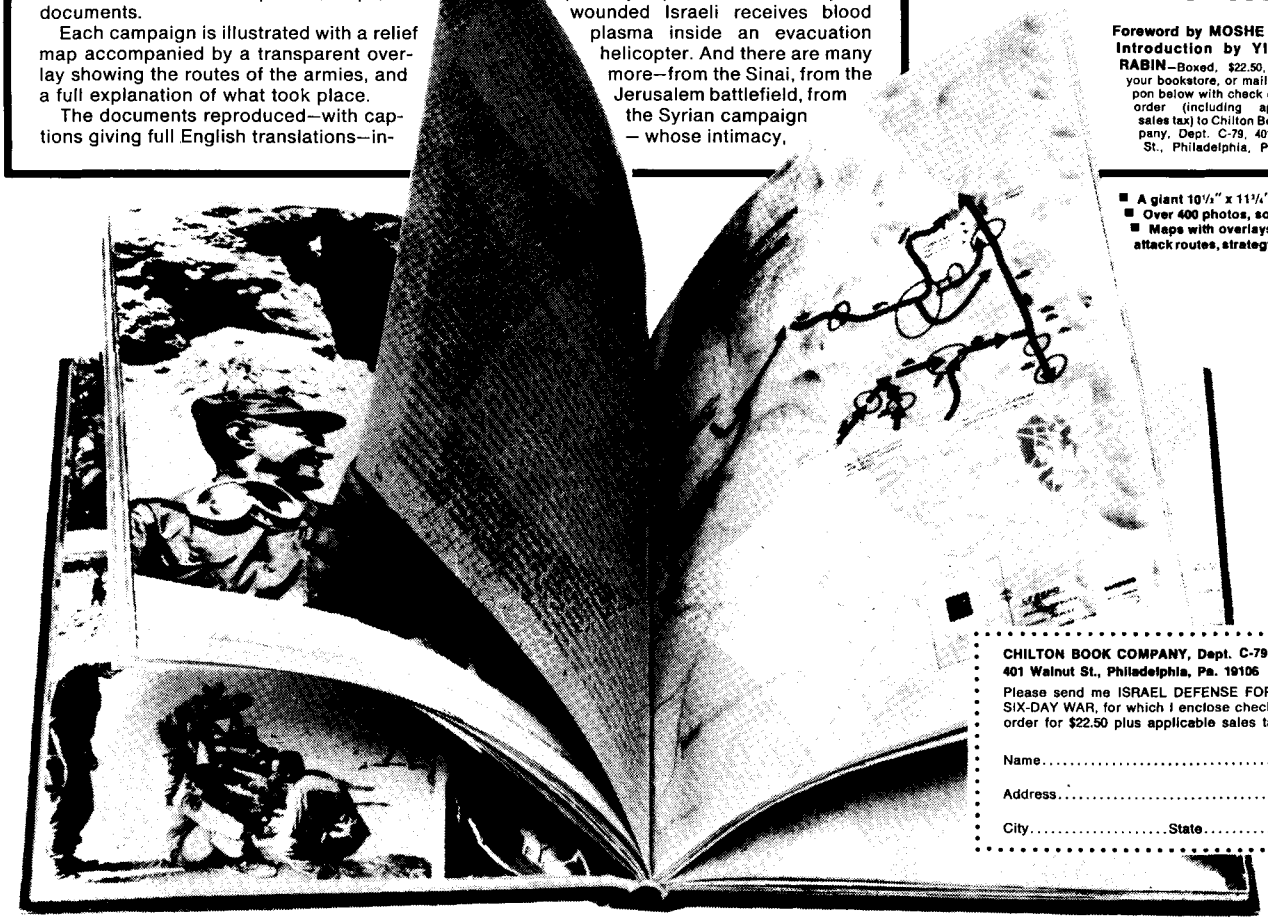

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has seriously weakened the social fabric of America. Has the time not come to call a moratorium on the cult of conscience? I do not wish to belabor a point that has been forcefully and eloquently argued in these pages by Nathan Glazer and others, but I do wish to register the opinion that it is possible to criticize American policy and the conduct of the war in Vietnam, on political as well as moral grounds, without speaking of genocide; and that this odious comparison in fact constitutes a veritable act of blasphemy toward the memory of the six million dead, to say nothing of the gross historical obtuseness it reveals.

The moral problem faced by Kurt Gerstein was at once easier and more difficult than the dilemmas we face today. The evil Gerstein confronted was overwhelming and obvious, but the price exacted for his fidelity to conscience was infinitely higher than that which anyone is expected to pay today. The lessons to be learned from Gerstein's predicament are complex and cannot be deduced by crude analogies. But as little as blind and unqualified subservience to law will the apotheosis of conscience help us to act in conformity with our political and moral heritage.

The Last Tycoons

THE MOGULS. By NORMAN ZIEROLD. *Coward-McCann. 339 pp. $6.95.*
THALBERG. By BOB THOMAS. *Doubleday. 389 pp. $7.95.*
THE STUDIO. By JOHN GREGORY DUNNE. *Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 252 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by HEYWOOD GOULD

WHATEVER ELSE it may be, there is one thing that Hollywood is, was, and always will be: a business. In its infancy, the movie was recognized as a medium of tremendous commercial appeal; many diverse entrepreneurial types struggled to control it, but power was finally seized by a group of ruthless, egocentric profiteers so similar in background, taste, and personality that the movie business seemed to have been created with them in mind. Hollywood did not spring full blown from the fevered, philistine imagination of the public. It was painstakingly developed by these men; and if one can wade through the anecdotal effluvia of Norman Zierold's *The Moguls*, one can see how and why they did it.

Zierold's subjects are the men who ran the film studios that flourished in Hollywood's golden era: Carl Laemmle of Universal; L. B. Mayer and Irving Thalberg of MGM; Samuel Goldwyn; Lewis J. Selznick; Jesse Lasky, Adolph Zukor, Cecil B. De Mille, and B. P. Schulberg of Paramount; Darryl F. Zanuck; William Fox; Harry Cohn of Columbia; the Warner brothers; the Schenck brothers—men who legitimized a bastard industry and became national figures in the process.

Like most people who write about the movies, Zierold unabashedly rehearses those twice-told tales that are infuriatingly familiar even to those who have only a nodding acquaintance with Hollywood mythology. Yet the mere juxtaposition of the lives and careers of the moguls provides a well-drawn, remarkably consistent portrait of a type of American capitalist that is slowly becoming extinct.

With the exception of Zanuck, all the moguls were Jewish (Cecil B. De Mille qualifies because of his Jewish mother). Most of them were born in the ghettos of Eastern Europe to large, poverty-stricken families. Almost all of them (including Zanuck) were forced to fend for themselves at early ages. Lewis J. Selznick, who came from a family of eighteen, migrated from Kiev to London at the age of twelve. Samuel Goldwyn left Warsaw when he was eleven. Adolph Zukor arrived in England from Hungary at the age of fifteen with forty dollars sewn in his pockets.

The moguls began in the retail trades traditionally followed by Jews: Goldwyn was a glove salesman, Selznick a jeweler, Fox a cloth sponger, Zukor a furrier, Laemmle a store manager. They were drawn to what was then the nickelodeon business by retailing, not by artistic interests. ("The picture business is like the Woolworth business where you can bring the whole family," L. B. Mayer often said.) The set-up was ideal: quick turnover, cash customers, and no returns. They understood better than anyone else that a business with these advantages could be immensely profitable.

The moguls were ambitious and maniacally energetic. They had an obsessive commitment to film making which never flagged during their long years in the business. On the whole they were uneducated men who used their untutored tastes as touchstones for judging public receptivity. They were shrewd about others and completely naive about themselves—the paradoxical psychic combination that one finds in most successful men. The moguls who failed were the cultured, introspective ones, whose self-deprecating cynicism diluted their ambition. Lewis J. Selznick, who built a multimillion dollar film empire before 1920, but preferred to sit at home surrounded by his collection of Chinese vases, once said: "Less brains are necessary in the motion-picture industry than in any other." He enraged his colleagues with his cavalier attitude toward them and the business that meant so much to them. But Selznick lived to regret his impieties; he was driven into bankruptcy by his vindictive partner Adolph Zukor. B. P. Schulberg, the only college graduate in the Hollywood hierarchy, was destroyed by the twin hazards of movie success—whiskey and available women—temptations the other moguls could take in great quantities or leave severely alone.

ZIEROLD shows how Fox and Laemmle wrested control of the film industry from a powerful trust that controlled 85 per cent of the motion-picture patents, plus all the producing, distributing, and licensing facilities. The trust was composed of ten companies that were run by men who had a patronizing contempt for their product and the people who paid to see it. The business was slowly languishing under their lackadai-

HEYWOOD GOULD, *a young writer living in New York, reviewed four books on the Beatles in our April issue.*

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sical despotism when Fox and Laemmle, both nickelodeon owners, decided to break away. Fox formed his own film distribution company and sued the Trust for violation of the Sherman Act when it tried to drive him out of business. When Laemmle started his own production company the Trust slapped him with more than 300 patent infringement suits in a three-year period, and hired goons to beat up his employees and wreck his equipment. In 1915, however, the Wilson administration filed an anti-trust suit of its own, and the Trust was doomed. Unable to win in the courts or compete on the open market, it relinquished control of the film industry to the men who believed in its future.

Perhaps only foreigners could have wrought the miracle that the movie business soon became. What, after all, was Hollywood but America seen through the worshipful, distorted prism of an immigrant's sensibility? Only an immigrant could so idealize the homely fortitude of Tom Mix, the cherry-pie goodness of Miss Mary Pickford, America's Sweetheart. Only an outsider could be so taken with a popular culture that many native Americans considered beneath contempt.

The moguls weren't ashamed of their Jewishness—but in those pre-Portnoy days the Jewish image was no asset at the box office. Mayer promised to hire Danny Kaye on the condition that he get a nose job. And Harry Cohn refused to sign a Jewish actor for an important part, saying "Around this studio the only Jews we put in pictures play Indians." Yet they did add much from their own background to the mythic American landscape of the movies. The fantasies of mud-caked ghettos and dismal tenements were transformed into the American Dream with the rise of stout, sultry, middle-European vamps like Theda Bara, and Vilma Banky. Slippery gigolo types like Valentino and Navarro came more from the European ideal of suave, manipulative masculinity than from anything American. But the avid, protean taste of the public had no trouble absorbing them.

By creating the star system and the feature-length film, by their genius for publicity, but most of all by their conviction that the public shared their taste for opulence, melodrama, and intrigue, the moguls built an empire that withstood a depression, a war, another anti-trust action, and the rise of TV. Acting as the Inner Circle of Hollywood, they sometimes put the well-being of the industry ahead of their own studios' fortunes. With their mutual backgrounds they represented a familial force as potent for the movie business as that of the great corporate dynasties like the Fords and the Rockefellers.

In their time the moguls acquired a reputation for vulpine villainy that was unsurpassed even by the bad guys in their movies. Intellectuals condemned them for having deliberately stunted the artistic growth of the film form. To Edmund Wilson they were "megalomaniac cloak and suiters" who had seduced and despoiled his "needy friends" with their extravagant salaries and shoddy standards. They had no more virulent critics than those who labored profitably in their studio sweat shops. Analysts' offices and magazines were full of breast-beaters who took home hundreds of thousands in the depression days and hated themselves and their benefactors for it.

TIME and the passing of an era have taken the edge off much of that invective. The moguls now survive in stories told by people whose memories have taken a self-gratulatory turn. Under Zierold's condescending scrutiny they emerge as well-worn vaudevillians, strutting, sneering, and bumbling through one disastrous confrontation after another. They are rebuffed by leading ladies, riposted by writers, and bested by cunning agents. Zierold himself never stops to wonder how these paper tigers ever managed to build such imposing businesses. He never seeks to expose the master oneupman who lurked behind Samuel Goldwyn's malapropisms, or the iron ambition so successfully masked by absent-minded, avuncular men like Zukor and Laemmle. Like the industry they created, the moguls were complex, ambiguous men. Zierold does not honor them in their complexity.

The moguls decided very early in the game that it was sheer folly to leave the destiny of corporate Hollywood in the irresponsible hands of the artists. Executives were needed to oversee the products of their film factories: men who could think like businessmen but speak like film makers, who understood the consequences of financial failure and would sacrifice everything, including quality, to avoid it. Thus the producer was born. And because everyone in Hollywood has to be "creative," the myth of the creative producer followed soon afterward.

IRVING THALBERG, the subject of Bob Thomas's informed biography, was the apotheosis of the type. Known as the "boy wonder" of Hollywood, he developed an awesome reputation as a master producer while still in his early twenties. At twenty he was the studio manager of Carl Laemmle's Universal Pictures. At twenty-five he was production head of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. At thirty-seven he was dead, a legend in his own time, the recipient of an outpouring of grief and tribute that Hollywood has yet to equal.

Thomas, the author of a biography of Harry Cohn, has approached his subject with cautious affection. He neither glorifies nor debunks Thalberg; he simply tells the story of a capable, contradictory man who was driven and destroyed by the system he helped create.

By Hollywood standards Thalberg combined the soul of an artist with the instincts of a moneymaker. His formula was simple: big stars, lavish productions, sparkling dialogue, and simple plots. He was diabolically accurate in figuring complicated film budgets, a master at cutting corners without sacrificing production value. A Thalberg movie was a lesson in how to make a "quality product" that was also a commercial success. His best pictures—*Camille, Mutiny on the Bounty, The Good Earth, Grand Hotel*—had an extravagant, larger-than-life quality that be-

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came known as the "Thalberg touch." He was a dedicated, skillful producer of popular entertainment who took himself very seriously. None of his movies even remotely satisfies the standards one reserves for a work of art.

But it was Thalberg's personality, not his *oeuvre*, that created the legend. A frail, dark-eyed young man with a saintly, sepulchral demeanor, he exercised a hypnotic fascination over everyone who knew him. Even the most sardonic observers of Hollywood like Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur were completely captivated. "He carried with him the accoutrements of an artist," Budd Schulberg wrote; "he was like a young pope." F. Scott Fitzgerald, who was intrigued by obsessive personalities, based *The Last Tycoon* on Thalberg's power struggle with Louis B. Mayer, a struggle which Thalberg lost, to the everlasting advantage of his mystique.

THALBERG was the Camille of Hollywood. He had been born a blue baby. A shattered, diseased heart pounded in his chest, making him subject to frequent physical breakdowns. Nevertheless, he worked at a pace that would have killed healthier men, making bittersweet allusions to his imminent death in the presence of worshipful underlings. He was courtly, considerate, and persuasive, but though he inspired respect and loyalty he made no lasting friendships. He had the kind of retailer's mind that could worship talent but hold talented people in contempt because they were working for him, not he for them. To him, actors were children, and directors had been rendered superfluous by talking pictures, which made it unnecessary to tell a story visually. Only writers were indispensable; it annoyed Thalberg that he couldn't live without them.

In spite of his sensitivity, in spite of his charisma, Irving Thalberg was also a mogul in the classic sense. He had a mogul's fascination with the commercial possibilities of the movies. "Entertainment is the purpose and end of the photoplay," he said. "Other arts generally appeal to a selected group, but the motion-picture art, and it is an art, must have universal appeal. This is fundamental for the motion picture industry with its investment of hundreds of millions of dollars." Profit and popularity came first. Thalberg had no sympathy for artists like Von Stroheim who were openly disdainful of budgets and box-office appeal. He invented the institution of the public preview and was known to revamp a picture completely if the audience response was unfavorable. This practice may have been responsible for the death of more good movies than any other Hollywood innovation, but it did provide Thalberg with an unbroken chain of box-office successes.

Thomas bemoans the fact that Thalberg is mentioned only sketchily in all artistic histories of the movies. But Thalberg probably did more harm than good to the film art. By undervaluing the importance of the director he eliminated the only figure who could effectively exercise artistic and technical control over a film. In exploiting the star system, he replaced the ideal of screen performance with that of screen presence. Both the "Thalberg touch" and the MGM star vehicle it graced have today become camp curiosities, while movies made at other studios by strong directors retain their artistic validity.

THE MOGULS created an institution. Their epigones are the drably competent middle-managers who have been created to perpetuate it. In John Gregory Dunne's prose documentary, *The Studio*, we see these smooth, new executives at work. Using a deadpan, cinéma-vérité style reminiscent of Lillian Ross's film journalism, Dunne trains his camera eye on the manifold activities of Twentieth-Century Fox, currently Hollywood's most successful movie studio. Fox is the preserve of the Zanuck family. Darryl, a cigar-chomping, egotistical mogul of the old school, came out of retirement in 1962, rescued the studio from bankruptcy, and put his son Richard in charge of production. Now the old man sits in feudal splendor in his New York office, controlling the finances, while his son turns out multimillion dollar productions like *The Sound of Music*, which has already grossed over $100 million.

Dunne spent a year at Twentieth-Century Fox. He observed the fascinating process of packaging, producing, and promoting a piece of popular entertainment. His camera cuts quickly from story conferences to contract negotiations, auditions, and premieres. It lurches through the commissary, pans across the tense faces on the set of *Star*, and peeks discreetly through the potted plant in Richard Zanuck's office while millions of dollars change hands. There are precise, stage-managed vignettes of hard-boiled agents, cynical executives, omniscient directors. We sit through preproduction meetings of *The Boston Strangler* and *Dr. Dolittle*. An intricate science-fiction TV series is created right before our very eyes. Dunne's stated intention was to "find . . . something about the state of mind called Hollywood." What he offers is a blandly accurate portrayal of corporate America in action.

The Studio actually is more about Los Angeles than Hollywood. A hot, smoggy hush rises out of its pages, and seems to spread in torporous waves over all the characters. The famed L.A. sun is everywhere, glinting on the cars in the parking lot and the quiet blue surfaces of the kidney-shaped swimming pools in Beverly Hills. Gone is the colorful, bustling Hollywood of the moguls. Everything here is hot and silent. The offices have thick carpets that absorb all extraneous noise. Voices are never raised, crises are always carefully resolved, histrionics are frowned upon. The good guys are the ones who stay cool and competent. The heavies are the people who aren't cool: the has-been director sweating profusely as he tries to sell a story; the third-rate agent trying to throw his weight around in the studio commissary.

The elder Zanuck makes a few cameo appearances, enlivening the pace like a good character in a bad movie. He is garish, uninhibited, self-satisfied—a far cry from his son, who sits tight and quiet behind his big desk working his jaw muscles and flicking invisible

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ashes off his jacket. Darryl Zanuck threw importunate agents out of his office; his son wearily endures them. Darryl Zanuck made movies; his son makes deals.

Dunne is neither sanguine nor somber about the studio. Movies are more of a consumer business today than they ever were, he seems to be saying. More and more they are coming under the control of sophisticated wheeler-dealers like Richard Zanuck. A good deal of the flair and fun has gone out of them, and that's something we'll all have to live with.

But the element of crude, sensual excitement that the moguls imparted to the film medium still smolders on unquenched by mergers and merchandising techniques. Anyone who has ever visited a movie set has felt it in the air, has seen it on the strained, expectant faces of even the most hardened professionals. And when all the deals have been made and the agents and lawyers have gone off to lunch, there is still a handful of people who can put that excitement on the screen.

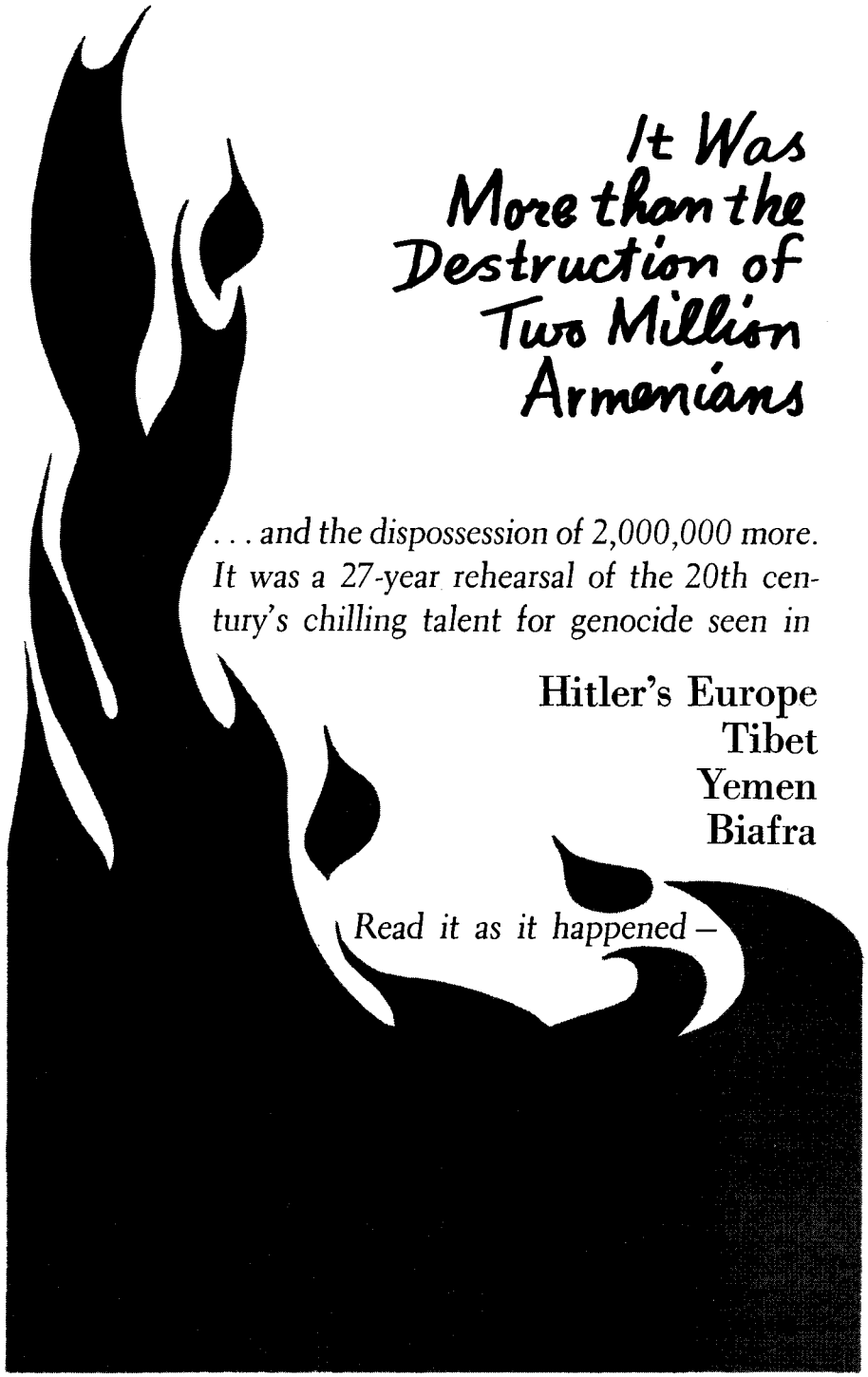
The Bureau

THE F.B.I. IN OUR OPEN SOCIETY. By HARRY and BONARO OVERSTREET. *Norton. 400 pp. $6.95.*

Reviewed by ISIDORE SILVER

IN AN ERA when books like Jerome Skolnick's *Justice Without Trial,* James Q. Wilson's *Varieties of Police Behavior,* and Paul Chevigny's *Police Power* have systematically analyzed the social functions of law-enforcement agencies, it is nothing short of foolish to believe, as the Overstreets do, that the FBI responds "simply and literally to instructions given it by an appropriate authority." Analyses of which laws are enforced and of how they are enforced, of the political relationships of agencies to other power groups, and of agencies' perceptions of their roles, have become the staples of serious, current attempts to understand the role of law enforcement in our soci-

ISIDORE SILVER *is an associate professor of Law and Environment at the University of Massachusetts.*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ety. But in their analysis of the FBI, the Overstreets, relying on secondary sources and making no field inquiries of their own, do not get beyond confidently depicting a world of selfless and dedicated law enforcers conscientiously doing a thankless and complicated task. This is the stuff of whimsy, not social analysis. The title of their book notwithstanding, the role of federal law enforcement in a democracy is the one subject resolutely avoided in the Overstreets' tendentious attack on J. Edgar Hoover's enemies.

The Overstreets' technique of relying on Hoover's testimony before Congressional committees and on statements made by his former employers (attorneys-general of the United States) may be sufficient to demolish some of the more ornate fantasies about the FBI spun by Max Lowenthal, Fred J. Cook, William Turner, and other critics; it is singularly irrelevant to any analysis of the Bureau's actual function. Moreover, the Overstreets are no more accurate than these critics when they turn to defend the Bureau. Thus, they condemn the selective quotations which distort the validity of Lowenthal's and Cook's attacks; yet the President's Crime Commission Report of 1967, which they frequently cite as authority for the proposition that the FBI is a highly competent agency fully aware and respectful of its own limitations, actually condemned the Bureau for lack of cooperation during the 50's with the Justice Department's Organized Crime and Racketeering Section. Donald R. Cressey's recently published *Theft of a Nation* amply corroborates the Crime Commission's verdict.

THIS IS not the only criticism of the FBI overlooked by the Overstreets with the same methodical selectivity that Cook and Lowenthal seem to have employed. Norman Ollestead's *Inside the F.B.I.* is mentioned, but his belief that the Bureau cannot relate to Negroes, especially when forced to choose between them and Southern police chiefs, is never acknowledged. Nor do the Overstreets take note of the common charge that the Bureau has practiced racial and religious discrimination in its hiring, or that Senator Joseph McCarthy used FBI files for his investigations—indeed, McCarthy's name is never mentioned even though Hoover's admiration for him is a matter of record. The closest the authors come to recognizing the existence of criticism is the flat—and undocumented—assertion that Bureau files are always confidentially maintained.

Insofar as *The F.B.I. in Our Open Society* exposes the often intemperate criticisms to be found in Cook and Lowenthal, it performs the minor service of reassuring us that muckraking is a hazardous enterprise, especially when the muck is well-hidden. Unfortunately, anti-muckraking is all but useless when it resorts to the same techniques—a naive reliance on self-serving statements and *ad hominem* attacks on one's opponents. Since much of what Mr. Hoover says is unprovable and often contradictory (he has, for example, been on all sides of the wiretapping issue), blind faith is as inappropriate a stance as blind condemnation.

THUS, although it is quite clear that J. Edgar Hoover is not a fascist ogre seeking to clamp a Gestapo-like police state upon us, neither is he the Overstreets' ideal type of the law enforcer, scrupulously upholding his sworn duty to carry out the mandates conferred upon him by Congress or by the attorney-general. The political infighting for power between Hoover and certain attorneys-general, Robert F. Kennedy among them, has been too well-documented to be doubted seriously. Hoover is a shrewd, perhaps even brilliant man who has certain beliefs about the meaning of the elusive term "national security" and about the role of the FBI in protecting it. He has acted on those beliefs, has attempted to convince others (especially Congress) of the essential validity of his aims, and has used his authority to seek broad social acceptance of his positions on certain crucial matters, notably that of Communism in American life.

Though they fail to examine the effect of Hoover's beliefs on the conduct of his Bureau, the Overstreets indirectly do raise some interesting problems in their defense of him. The liberal Left, in its quest for scapegoats, *has* fastened undue attention on the FBI. After all, at the beginning of World War II, as the authors point out, the greatest violation of civil liberties was perpetrated not by the Bureau secretly but by the the military overtly: "The darkest injustice of the war period in this country was indubitably that practiced against the West Coast Japanese. That was an Army operation; and, significantly, Hoover opposed it." Although their explanation for Hoover's stand is not reassuring ("No security purpose was, to [Hoover's] mind, served by the wholesale uprooting of our Japanese population"), his position on this question cannot be ignored.

Yet it seems to be very important for the Left to convince others, though not necessarily itself, that Hoover is a fascist. In the service of this necessity Hoover's style (his perspiring-hand phobia, his priggishness) and the Bureau's incredible "squareness" are often confused with those functions it actually performs, and which do not always correspond with its manners. Some of Hoover's more outlandish pronouncements do engender general disquiet, but his prissiness should offset rather than stimulate fears that we are all having our phones tapped and are about to be hauled out of our beds at night. Ironically, the only known night raids in recent times occurred in 1962 when the Bureau, on orders of then Attorney-General Robert Kennedy, raided newspapermen's homes to get some information about the steel price rise.

THE fascination of the Left—and, for that matter, the Right too—with the FBI lies in its being not "un-American" but rather, as Walter Goodman has noted about the House Un-American Activities Committee, all *too* American. If anyone bothered to study the personal qualities of the average special agent, he would probably discover an unusually high quotient of Midwest provincialism, xenophobia, and chauvinism; the Bureau is staffed with men who yearn

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Next, an historic interview by the editors of Hamburg's enterprising *Der Spiegel* with Henry Ford II. In a burst of blunt candor, Ford acknowledges he was wrong in underestimating German cars, wishes he had bought Volkswagen 20 years ago. He finds the Germans sporting competitors. But he is "furious" with the Japanese. He promises to show them "what *competitive fighting is.*"

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From the *East African Standard* of Nairobi, a startling, documented report on how France has quietly maintained top military and political power in eleven African republics.

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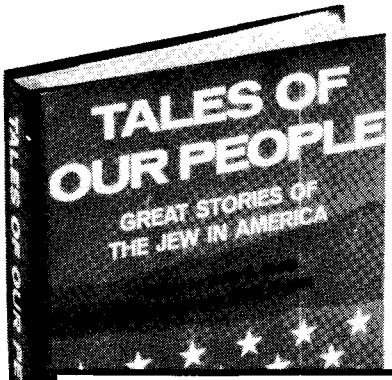

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for urban peace, for the simple pleasures of a Tsarist Russia or a Chiangist China, and who cannot quite understand the political and social revolutions of our time. Like most small-town Americans, FBI men believe that snooping is a perfectly acceptable form of social activity, especially if your neighbor is up to no good, and most especially if he makes strange political noises.

Of course, we cannot ignore the great potential for harm inherent in Babbitry in the guise of law enforcement. Huey Long once said that fascism, if it comes to America, will come in the guise of Americanism. The FBI represents a dangerous streak of authoritarianism in American life, but it would take a great deal—and neither a world war nor a cold war, it should be remembered, was enough—to convert that into totalitarianism. J. Edgar Hoover, like Joe McCarthy, has preferred to fish in small ponds of troubled waters and has eschewed any grand designs for oceanic whale-hunting. One shudders to think what the FBI would have been like had it been headed by a true ideologue like Allen Dulles. The type of person the Bureau attracts is far less dangerous than those Harvard Ph.D.'s, their minds aflame with political theory, who prefer to work for the "swinging" CIA.

Not that the FBI is not in need of reform. But reform has always, and necessarily, been a slow process; changes in the Bureau occur not so much with the enactment of new laws (as the Overstreets argue), and not in accordance with the Bureau's own malevolent inclinations (as its critics believe), but in response to society's changing concerns. When the Ku Klux Klan became worrisome in the 20's, the FBI acted because strong political and public pressure forced it to (not, as the Overstreets ridiculously maintain, because the Klan threatened to violate Louisiana's constitutional right to a republican form of government). As the "Communist menace" recedes and the dangers of organized crime increase, Bureau resources will be shifted accordingly. Of course, the shift may well be delayed by Mr. Hoover's perceptions and by "organizational lag," but it will come.

Although *The F.B.I. in Our Open Society* seems to have been written principally to refute Fred J. Cook's *The F.B.I. Nobody Knows*, and therefore tells us virtually nothing about the Bureau's function, it does modestly serve to limit the range of valid criticism. And it also offers the occasion to observe that in this time of deep-rooted questioning, we should be frying other institutional fishes. The FBI need no longer rate a high priority on our list of social devils; at the moment, it is a strictly second-rate danger.

Economic Revisionism

THE FISCAL REVOLUTION IN AMERICA. By HERBERT STEIN. *University of Chicago Press. 526 pp. $10.00.*

MONETARY VS. FISCAL POLICY. A DIALOGUE. By MILTON FRIEDMAN and WALTER W. HELLER. *Norton. 95 pp. $3.95.*

Reviewed by ROBERT LEKACHMAN

FOR AMERICAN Keynesians February 1964 was a month to remember. After more than a year of haggling, Congress finally enacted a major income-tax cut at a time when a budgetary deficit already existed and the economy of its own accord was expanding. The moment was particularly triumphant for Walter W. Heller who as Chairman of the Kennedy Council of Economic Advisers had patiently educated his principal in modern economics to such effect that by 1962 Mr. Kennedy was prepared to accept the political risks involved in combating the time-worn identifications between public and private finance and individual and governmental virtue which still appeared dear to the hearts of many Congressional antiques. Fed by happy events, the economists' euphoria lasted nearly two years. Just as the Council of Economic Advisers had predicted, the pace of economic advance in 1964 and 1965 accelerated and unemployment fell to gratifyingly low levels; only midway in 1965 did prices

ROBERT LEKACHMAN'S *article, "Nixon's Program," appeared last month.*

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slowly begin to stir. As enlightened businessmen purred and politicians basked in their approval, the prestige of the economists soared to new highs. And why not? The Keynesians had tamed the business cycle, solved the problems of unemployment and lagging economic growth, and got the country moving again.

WHAT rang the curtain down upon this social-science idyll was the fatal combination of Vietnam and a mendacious President. By the beginning of 1966 many economists (myself among them) were concluding that the combination of the previous year's escalation in Vietnam, the likelihood of further escalation, and the inflationary anticipations these policies engendered in an economy approaching full employment urgently required the therapy of an immediate increase in taxes. Fiscal policy after all is reversible. But the White House dog did not bark, which is to say that the *Economic Report,* prepared as usual by the Council of Economic Advisers, contained no recommendation for tax change.

By the time the *Report* appeared, Walter Heller had prudently resigned; he was succeeded by Gardner Ackley, a respected expert in fiscal policy and the author of the leading text in macroeconomics. How could Ackley and his esteemed colleagues have endorsed such a Presidential policy? After all, men have been known even in the United States to resign from office and a scholar has more to suffer from his colleagues (*vide* the fate at MIT of Walt Rostow) than from even a vengeful President. The answer is that the President thoughtfully averted a possible clash between professional conscience and political exigency by arranging to cook the statistics upon which the Council relied. Mr. Johnson and the Pentagon underestimated the 1966 cost of the Vietnam war by a tidy $11 billion, just about half the military outlays in that year. It was this "underestimate," based on the fantastic assumption that the war would be over by the middle of 1967, which the Council of Economic Advisers accepted in mak-

When it became apparent that Turkey intended to destroy its Armenian population,

Aram Bey fought it out in the hills.

Abraham Hartunian stayed with his people in the city and bargained for their lives.

Others, like the crippled girl who gave false spy testimony, could not withstand the terror.

"[*Hartunian's memoir,* Neither To Laugh nor To Weep] *is a valuable document, not only because it records an almost incredible experience but because it conveys so vividly a sense of the regeneration and ironic optimism that portray man's will to survive. It does indeed have a biblical force; as someone else said, it reminds one of the Old Testament, of Job's cries of 'why.'* "

—Marjorie Housepian, author of *A Houseful of Love*

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ing its own estimates of government spending, budget deficit, and price change.

By the time, a year and a half later, that Lyndon Johnson finally did seek a tax hike, inflation had accelerated; and by the still more distant date in mid-1968 when Wilbur Mills graciously gave the new taxes his royal assent, inflationary psychology had taken a firm enough grip so that the present combination of higher taxes, tight credit, and curtailed federal spending has still not succeeded in cooling the economy. In 1969, in short, the Keynesians do not look nearly as convincing as they did four or five years ago, and it does them no good to put the blame on the politicians. If the Keynesians were willing to accept credit in 1964 and 1965 for their masterly political economy, parity of reasoning now assigns to them responsibility for the later failure.

THE CONSERVATIVE economists whose voices have been drowned by the Keynesians now have their chance to counterattack. Before I turn to the two counterattacks at hand, I do want to put my own view of the situation on record. It is this. At least until Vietnam distorted the economy like everything else, the Keynesians had very little of which to be ashamed and a good deal of which to be proud in the economic performance of America in the 1960's. The present uninterrupted general expansion from April 1961 is the longest in the annals of American economic history. Low unemployment, high rates of economic growth, and the Great Society legislation of 1964 and 1965 are very substantial accomplishments, especially in contrast to the unoriginality of policy and the sluggishness of economic activity which characterized the Eisenhower era. As Paul Samuelson recently reminded us, there are worse things than inflation, notably unemployment.

Still, inflation is undeniably a nuisance, the Nixon administration is in power, or at least in office, and the time for the revisionists is nigh. Herbert Stein, long associated with the Committee on Economic Development and generally credited with the comparatively enlightened economic statements of that business group, is now a member of the Nixon Council of Economic Advisers. Rumor has it that his influence is powerful enough on occasion to defeat even Arthur F. Burns, the President's puissant counselor, as on the issue of the repeal of the investment tax credit. What can be derived from his long, careful, and quite fair-minded history of fiscal policy from Hoover to Johnson? A first impression is that the book is somewhat mistitled. A better label might have been *Fiscal Evolution in America*, for the burden of Stein's tale is the absence of revolutionary leaps in either policy or ideology. As early as 1946 when Congress passed (Senator Robert A. Taft concurring) the Employment Act of 1946, there was, argues Stein, general public agreement that the federal government had a role to play in the achievement and maintenance of prosperity.

Stein is reasonably convincing in his judgment that despite a rather large quantity of old-style budget balancing rhetoric from such stalwarts as Maurice Stans at the Bureau of the Budget and George Humphrey at the Treasury, Eisenhower's economic policy was quite up to date. Two of the men who influenced it, Arthur F. Burns and Paul McCracken, have reappeared in the Nixon administration to the accompaniment of the general praise of their professional colleagues, even the critics among them.

THE CONTRAST between the Eisenhower and the Kennedy administrations was a matter not of doctrine but of valuations. As Stein puts it: "If fiscal policy was inadequate from the standpoint of full employment it was because more aggressive devotion of fiscal policy to the objective of full employment was considered to entail too high a price in other objectives—eventually getting tax revision of the right kind, checking the long-range growth of federal spending, promoting economic growth, supporting international confidence in the dollar, and fighting inflation." What prevented Republicans from cutting taxes in 1958, then, was not dimness of wit but rather hardness of heart.

Stein concedes that President Kennedy was "for a President" exceptionally open to intellectual argument, and he was surrounded by some truly brilliant and self-confident economists, among them Paul Samuelson, John Kenneth Galbraith, James Tobin, and Walter Heller himself. By the time Mr. Kennedy was ready to recommend the 1964 tax cut, something like consensus on its advisability had developed. Loud as were their voices, the Congressional dinosaurs no longer had the votes to block it. I have elsewhere labeled this consensus and the compromise which it embodied "commercial Keynesianism." In its 1964 and 1965 version it consisted of two or three dollars of tax reduction for every dollar expended on social programs. In the two years before Vietnam escalation dissolved all manner of consensus and retired LBJ himself, it was possible both to cut taxes and to enact a miscellany of anti-poverty, education, health, and housing legislation. The business community, slower to learn in my judgment than in Stein's, finally came to understand that full employment meant larger sales and higher profits.

THE ALLIANCE between Great Society Establishment liberals and Committee on Economic Development-style businessmen was bound to dissolve once it became impossible either to cut taxes or to increase social spending. The New New Economics which Stein represents is the result of that dissolution. It addresses itself within a conservative, pro-business context to the problems of an economy burdened by the greed of the Pentagon, a worrisome inflation, and the desire of its constituency for lower taxes. While by no means discarding the tools of Keynesian fiscal policy, Stein is skeptical of the accuracy of economic forecasting, opposed to the frequent adjustments of economic policy which came in Democratic days to be called "fine-tuning," and more sympathetic than his Democratic predecessors to the Eisenhower set of priorities.

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The grand theory of the return to the days of Eisenhower the Good is provided by Milton Friedman, quondam adviser to Barry Goldwater and undisputed leader of the Chicago school of economists. What the Chicago school and its sympathizers at Columbia, Virginia, and UCLA esteem is free markets, limited government, and money. Here as in his massive and highly influential *A Monetary History of The United States 1867-1960,* Mr. Friedman advocates a monetary, as opposed to a fiscal, interpretation of American business-cycle history. In his view, the Federal Reserve System through its usually mistaken policies has played a crucial role in creating recessions and inflations. Greatly to oversimplify a highly controversial position, the monetary school is convinced that what counts in explaining the level of economic activity is not aggregate demand for goods and services (the gospel according to Keynes) but changes in the quantity of money (currency plus bank deposits) which is controlled by the Federal Reserve System. Accordingly, the clue to economic stability is not to be found in fiscal policy—which ought simply to be regulated according to the public's preferences between private and public goods—but in properly conducted monetary policy which in itself is capable of generating steady growth and high employment. Granted a stable monetary environment, individual initiatives and energies can be depended upon to generate happiness, prosperity, and freedom.

ALTHOUGH Heller holds his own quite successfully in his dialogue with Friedman, and the Chicago school, fortunately, has not converted the entire profession, Chicago teachings are quite clearly consistent with the inclinations of a conservative, noninterventionist President. On the other hand, the counterrevolution against the Keynesians is not likely to exile fiscal policy from Washington or produce undiscriminating attachment to budgets in balance or surplus.

The rather different danger is in the retreat from an activist conception of the federal government's role in economic affairs. In America social change comes slowly, seldom, and inadequately. But when it comes at all, it is almost invariably as the consequence of Presidential initiative. Activist fiscal policy goes hand in hand with activist social policy. The new emphasis upon monetary policy accords admirably with the new quietism of social policy. I hope we all survive until 1973.

Sentimental Journeys

HANOI. By MARY MCCARTHY. *Harcourt, Brace & World. 134 pp. $2.45.*

TRIP TO HANOI. By SUSAN SONTAG. *Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 91 pp. $1.45.*

Reviewed by PETER SHAW

FOR AT least four years the intellectual community poured out a steady stream of reasoned and informed criticism of the Vietnam war without seeming to have any appreciable effect on events. Consequently, as the war continued, more and more of its critics went over to the available kinds of activism. Some felt it necessary to risk arrest by declaring themselves ready to break the law, or by actually breaking it in legally complicated ways like signing petitions supporting draft-resistance, or withholding telephone or income taxes. Meanwhile, the same need to engage in action rather than thought has led in the case of some writers against the war to written deeds that may be considered the equivalents of the more active forms of protest. In such writings, even as events themselves have seemed to be drawing toward a cease-fire, many emotionally drained dissenters show that they have begun to doubt the efficacy and place of reason at the present moment in history.

Two critics who have announced that they have had enough of reasoning against the war in Vietnam are Mary McCarthy and Susan Sontag. For Mary McCarthy argument is uncalled for because, "in my opinion the Americans do not have a side in this war." For Susan Sontag there was never any question of adding to "the already eloquent opposition to the war"; she traveled to North Vietnam not to research a case but to express her "solidarity" with the North Vietnamese. Both she and Mary McCarthy attempt not to argue against the war but to bear witness against the United States.

Yet if they do not purport to offer political analysis they nevertheless do share a theory about the American action in Vietnam. It is that just as the Germans were lulled into acquiescence in their government's genocide by the euphemisms of the "Final Solution," the American people were led into and kept behind the Vietnam war by the false language of the American government. The abuse of language that has characterized the American action in Vietnam, furthermore, is seen by both of these writers to express the moral degeneracy of the capitalist-imperialist system in general and the bankruptcy of American civilization in particular. Indeed, so horrified are both Miss McCarthy and Miss Sontag by the United States that each eventually announces a preference for the Communist world. Miss Sontag, of course, prefers it only for others: "Though I believe incorporation into such a society will greatly improve the lives of most people in the world (and therefore support the advent of such societies), I imagine it will in many ways impoverish mine." Miss McCarthy, however, though she imagines herself a critic of any society she would live in, writes that if "world Communism comes to power":

> Never mind. Some sort of life will continue, as Pasternak, Solzhenitsyn, Sinyavski, Daniel have discovered, and I would rather be on their letterhead, if they would allow me, than on that of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom. . . .

MISS MCCARTHY emphasized the American abuse of language in the first paragraph of her earlier *Vietnam**: "Napalm has become 'In-

PETER SHAW, *an associate editor of* COMMENTARY, *is a frequent contributor to these pages.*

* Harcourt, Brace & World (1967), 106 pp., $1.95.

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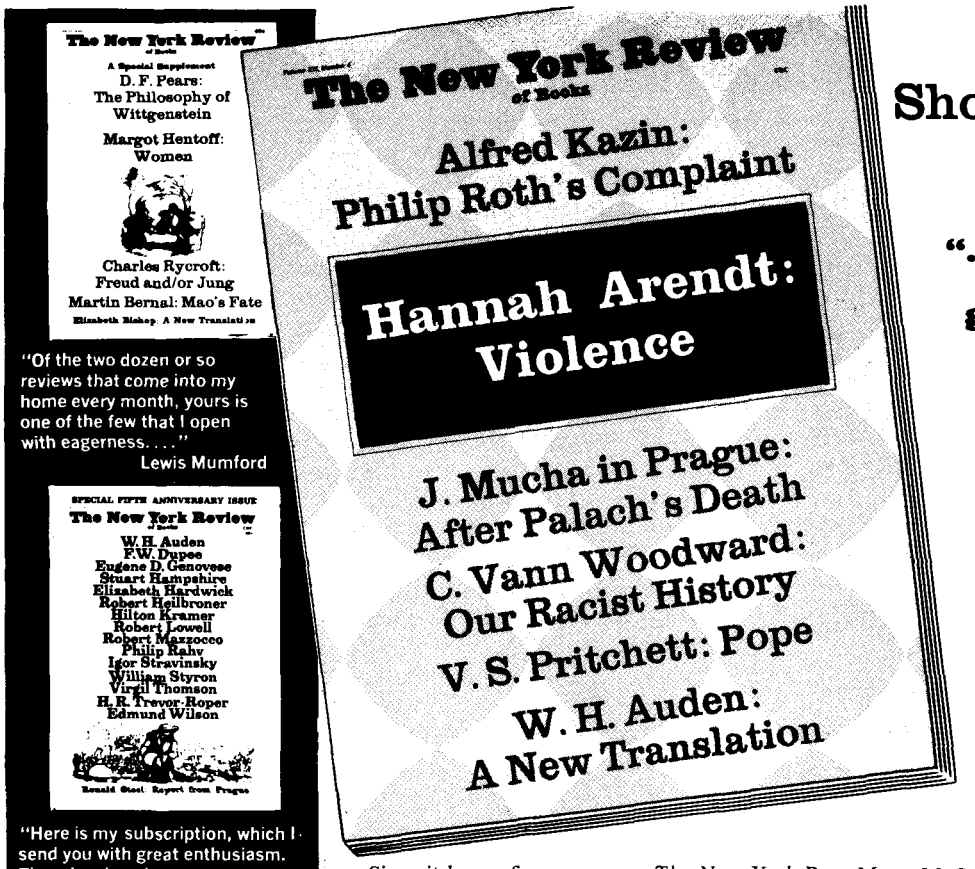
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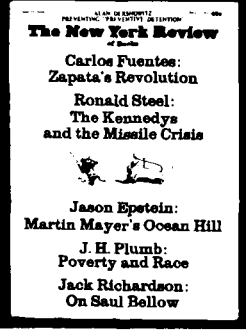
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cinderjell,' which makes it sound like Jello," she tells us, "And defoliants are referred to as weed-killers—something you use in your driveway." She goes on to expose the American fondness for self-deceiving, operational terminology like "constructed," "reconstructed," "consolidated," and "real New Life" hamlets, and the false expertise of terms like "infrastructure," which is used to refer to the Vietcong's organization.

But though she is especially offended by the euphemisms of American officials she eventually slides over from criticism of their terminologies into ridicule of their pronunciation and usage. As the Americans talk she records with disdain their concern for "the aspirations of the people," and their characterizations of their Vietnamese allies as "very sound men," or "one of the finest men and officers" they have ever known. And she observes of the Americans' "diction" that it "is peppery with oxymoron ('When peace breaks out,' 'Then the commodities started to hit the beach'), like a college president's address to an alumni dinner."

Ostensibly, such language as she records is offered as an index to American behavior in Vietnam, especially to the pacification effort. Thus a press officer's jargon is presumed to expose the culpable absurdity of his role, so that when he speaks of "the prommlms of failure," Miss McCarthy ironically advises the reader to "read 'problems of failure.'" And similarly, she witheringly quotes without comment the language of an officer who has pampered an orphaned child:

> "A casualty of war," that general repeated solemnly. "A casualty of war."

SIGNIFICANTLY, one of the five sections in Miss McCarthy's *Hanoi* is titled, "Language." Here she takes up the problem of the similarity of North Vietnamese rhetoric to the Stalinist dishonesties against which, along with other intellectuals of the anti-Communist Left, she had always vehemently set herself. When she encounters an example of this rhetoric—a heavy-handed attempt by a functionary to prevent her from detecting any hint of anti-Chinese sentiment in him by using an obviously anti-Chinese term that he thinks is a euphemism—she writes:

> I did not blame him, really. I blamed the United States. If we had not been bombing his country, Mr. Van might be a free, or at least a freer, spirit, instead of an axious chaperon fearful that his charges might draw an "improper" conclusion.

The glaring difficulty with this placing of blame is that elsewhere Miss McCarthy attributes the superior virtues of the North Vietnamese to the same bombing. No matter. She doesn't mean to excuse or argue, but to praise the one side and excoriate the other.

Thus she concludes that it is really the Americans who have adopted the old Stalinist language, while "the North Vietnamese, in their stiff phraseology, persist in speaking quite plainly." In other words, not only is it our fault that they must resort to dishonest rhetoric, but they don't do so at all. And not only is that rhetoric really "plain" talk, but it is poetic license as well. "It has occurred to me," Miss McCarthy writes,

> that the set phrases of North Vietnamese diction are really Homeric epithets. Compare "the insolent wooers," "the long-haired Achaeans," "cloud-gathering Zeus," "the hateful Furies" with "the American aggressors," "the American imperialists," "the war of destruction," "the air pirates."

But here Miss McCarthy writes as though she had not read her own previous book. For surely the set phrases of the North Vietnamese deserve comparison as well with the operational terminology of the Americans. Yet where she has an excessive irritability with the slightest *bêtises* of language in the South, she shows a determined championship of the worst vulgarities of language in the North.

At the end of *Hanoi* Miss McCarthy says that she came to feel that those virtues as a person and a writer which she had always cultivated and prided herself upon—fair-mindedness, disinterestedness, objectivity—had come to seem to her like mere "fossil remains." In face of the exigencies of the Vietnamese, "the license to criticize was just another capitalist luxury, a waste product of the system."

SUSAN SONTAG'S *Trip to Hanoi,* though it is full of reservations where Miss McCarthy has certainties, applies the same double standard to the United States and to North Vietnam. The spectacle of her own intellectual gymnastics in doing so does give Miss Sontag enough pause so that she asks the question: "Can North Vietnam really be such an exceptional place?" And though other moral supporters of North Vietnam have answered this by attributing the country's putative wonders to the effects of the bombing, she realizes that this will not do; yet she concludes: "I do know that North Vietnam, while definitely no Shangri-La, is a truly remarkable country; that the North Vietnamese is an extraordinary human being. . . ." On the evidence of her book, Miss Sontag arrives at this conclusion not on the basis of her experience, which she is honest enough to report as having been in many respects disturbing and disappointing, but as a logical consequence of her stated first premise: namely, that it was her duty not to criticize but to support the North Vietnamese.

She has conceived the problem of how to do so as if it were a problem in literary criticism. The North Vietnamese seem shallow, and her visit a "two-dimensional fairy-tale . . . in which I do not believe," so that "I somehow was unable to make the full intellectual and emotional connections that my political and moral solidarity with Vietnam implied." Yet, as with so many of the literary works that she has praised even though they have admittedly bored and disgusted her, Miss Sontag has decided beforehand that the Vietnamese are "admirable," and so knowing that virtue must exist under the veil, she is able to interpret seemingly unfavorable signs as the very proofs of its existence.

To perform this act, she too has had consciously to reject the complexities of critical thinking. (And she too believes that she was unfortunately unable to accomplish

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the sloughing-off entirely.) Yet, realizing what it is that she has rejected, and realizing too that "some of what I've written evokes the very cliché of the Western left-wing intellectual idealizing an agrarian revolution," she decides that "I can only avow that, armed with these very self-suspicions, I found, through direct experience, North Vietnam to be a place which, in many respects, *deserves* to be idealized."

Trip to Hanoi, then, is Susan Sontag's idealized version of North Vietnam, a country in which "the North Vietnamese genuinely love and admire their leaders," and in which any disturbing features need only to be thought about properly to be explained. Everything is as thinking makes it so.

Significantly, in view of the theory about language that she shares with Mary McCarthy, Susan Sontag tells us that she overcame her initial reluctance to think in such terms about North Vietnam as a result of what she calls "linguistic decisions." Through these, she too was able first to overcome her distaste for crude propaganda ("Much of the discourse we would dismiss as propagandistic or manipulative," she explains, "possesses a depth for the Vietnamese to which we would be insensitive"), and then to achieve a final, delicious surrender in which she is able "to pronounce the words 'capitalism' and 'imperialism' again. . . . That I've begun to use some elements of Marxist or neo-Marxist language again seems almost a miracle, an unexpected remission of historical muteness, a new chance to address problems that I'd renounced ever understanding."

THE INTELLECTUAL consequences of not simply opposing the United States over Vietnam, but committing oneself to supporting North Vietnamese Communism seem to me more damaging to the anti-war cause than these two well-intentioned writers may suspect. For when one adopts crude terminology, the distortions it causes in one's work will always tend to make readers reject that work—for the same reasons that one rejects the made-to-order art of socialist realism even when one is in sympathy with its subject. Thus when, in Mary McCarthy's books, a corrupt, Americanized South Vietnam and its people is contrasted with a utopian, inspiriting North; when down to the smallest details, even the appointments in hotel rooms, the North is shown to be superior to the South—cleaner, healthier, in better taste—it becomes impossible for the most sympathetic reader, if he has the slightest sensitivity to the truth, not to mistrust the reality of what is being described. And with good reason, as it turns out.

One of the characters in South Vietnam to whom Miss McCarthy gives extended treatment is a certain Major Be, head of a school for training anti-Communist cadres, or guerrillas. He is presented as one of "the Vietnamese counterparts of the American political scientists who have stamped their vocabulary and their habits of thought on this loony trial of strength in the Asian arena." Major Be, "his slant-eyes gleaming," is gradually revealed to be a doctrinaire, stern, self-denying revolutionary—a fascist, in short. ("As someone has put it," Miss McCarthy writes, "revolutionary slogans minus a revolution equals fascism.") But when it turns out that Major Be is a North Vietnamese who had fought against the French with the Viet Minh (precursors of the Vietcong) under General Giap (of Dienbienphu and Khe San), Miss McCarthy sees no need to qualify her judgment of him. It does not, for example, occur to her in the light of his background that Major Be might more reasonably be taken as a product of the mind of North Vietnam than as a reflector of the thinking of American political scientists. Nor, in her book on North Vietnam, when she is told that Nguyen Cao Ky as a little boy in a youth demonstration was the child who yelled loudest, "No one loves Uncle Ho more than the children," does it occur to her that the totalitarianism she sees in the adult Ky might have been learned in the North—and not just the geographical north, but in a youth squadron of Ho Chi Minh's: a mass of identically smiling children. If she read about such children in something like Orwell's *1984*, she would probably respond with horror; when she actually sees them in North Vietnam, however, she can only see happy kids throwing flowers at her.

Having made up her mind before confronting the facts, Miss McCarthy not surprisingly pays the price that her instinct as a novelist should have warned her would be the consequence. A novelist uses language to establish a character's origins and class, never to indicate his moral stature or his relative good or evil in the design of things. Available young girls in novels often mistake their ideal suitor because of his secondary characteristics, like his speech, but the novelist's art sorts out for the reader before the end of the book the difference between the aesthetic and the ethical. The novelist, that is to say, uses his sensibility to record impressions, his intelligence to assess their significance. In contrast, Miss McCarthy, in the little tea-drinking scene in which she draws out Major Be, and in the tea-drinking ceremonies in North Vietnam (at which the participants' slant-eyes do not gleam), is not rendering with the novelist's eye. For her principle of selectivity is not to discover that which gives life to her characters but that which will prove her thesis about them. And when the latter is what you are looking for, it will of course always seem to be there.

NOAM CHOMSKY well expresses the despair that has led to the distrust of intelligence felt in these books when he writes that he feels it to be a desecration and an insult to the Vietnamese people for him coolly to go on discussing the issues of the war. But what is accomplished by sacrificing one's objectivity in accordance with this feeling, and speaking with extreme diffidence and piety about the North Vietnamese? Very little, it seems to me. In the cases of Miss McCarthy and Miss Sontag the main result of abandoning reason has been a solipsistic withdrawal into personal feelings that can be of use neither in changing the minds of those who still support the war, nor in informing those already opposed to it.

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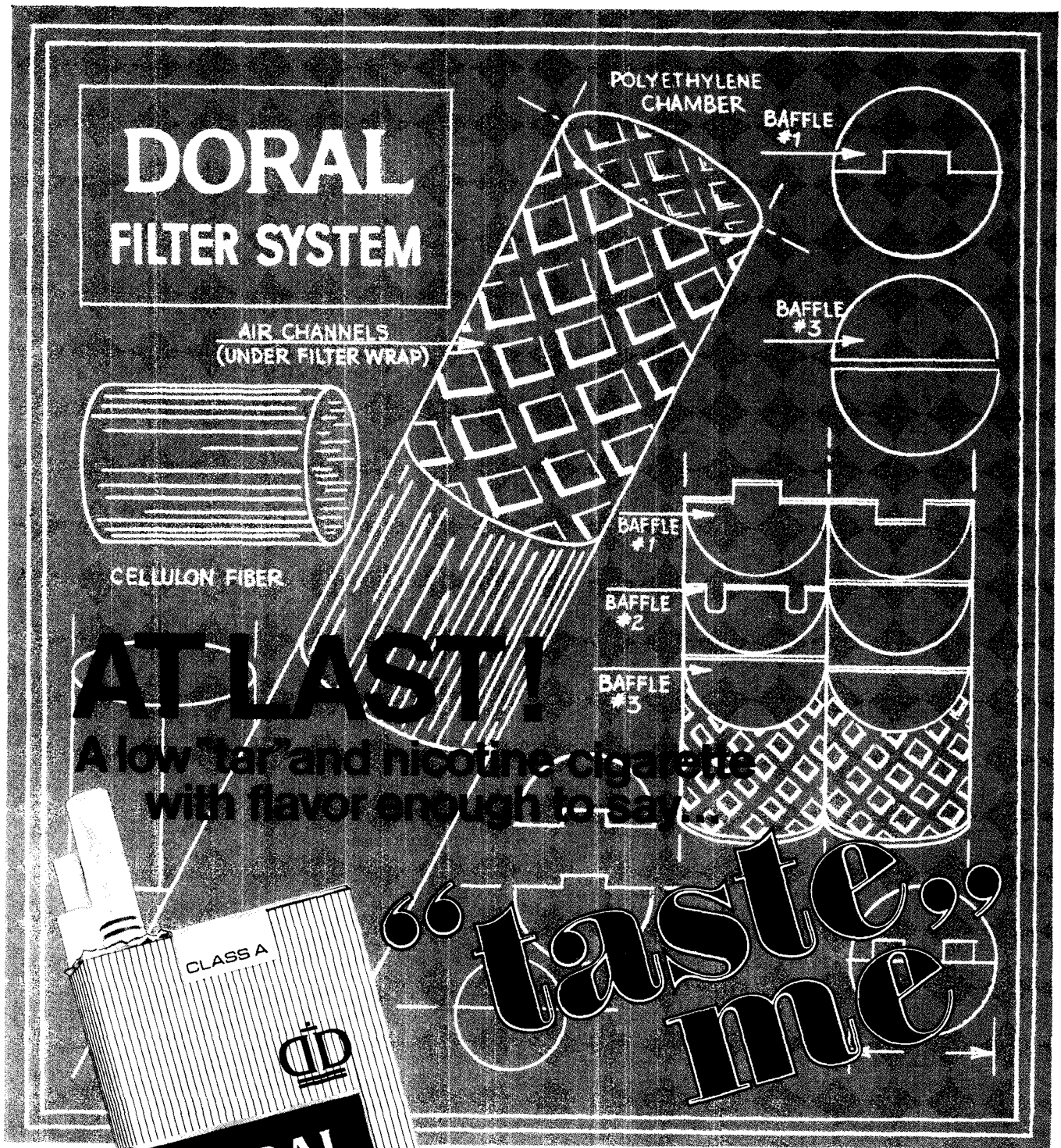

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